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WELL, THAT MAKES TEN JOBS NOW.
THAT BAD?
OH, HELLO, KYLE. IT WENT WELL UNTIL SHE FOUND OUT I WAS 16.
THAT'S HARSH.
THE REACTIONS ARE GETTING OLD.
YOU KNOW I MAKE ENOUGH FOR BILLS. JUST FOCUS ON SCHOOL.
NO WAY. I AM NOT RISKING THAT WITH YOUR OBSESSION WITH BEER AND SEX.
I'M NOT THAT BAD.
REALLY? SO WHAT WERE YOUR PLANS FOR TONIGHT?
WELL, I WAS THINKING OF TRYING TO GET YOU INTO BIKINI'S. FIND ME A GIRL FOR TONIGHT AND MAYBE GET YOU ONE, TOO.
RIGHT, BECAUSE EVERY LADY'S DREAM DATE ENDS WITH A PRISON SENTENCE FOR SCREWING A MINOR.
HEY, I WON'T TELL IF YOU WON'T.
IT'S YOUR LACK OF DISCRETION I FIND DISTURBING.

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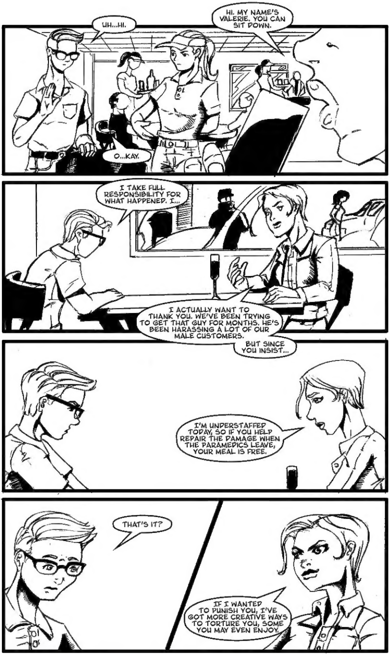
HEY!... HEY!!
WHAT?
WANT TO GIVE ME A BLOW JOB?
SORRY, BUT I KINDA DESTROYED YOUR RESTROOM.
I DID NOT NEED TO KNOW THAT.
I MEANT YOU MIGHT NEED A SCREWDRIVER FOR THE STALL AND AN AMBULANCE FOR THE GUY STILL IN THERE.
DAMN IT! THAT GUY IS IN THERE AGAIN?!

DAVID, WHAT HAPPENED?
SOME GUY PROPOSITIONED ME FOR A BLOW JOB. HE'LL HAVE A HEADACHE LONG AFTER HE WAKES UP.
WHAT?
I ACTUALLY ONLY MEANT TO SCARE HIM. HOW WOULD I KNOW THE STALL WAS GOING TO FLY OFF THE SCREWS?
THAT'S STILL ASKING FOR TROUBLE.
EVEN IF IT WAS INTENTIONAL, YOU'D THINK I HAD THE RIGHT TO WARD HIM OFF.
THE WORST THING ABOUT IT IS THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER BEEN HIT ON.
THE BOSS WANTS TO TALK TO YOU.
...SHIT.


UH...HI.
HI. MY NAME'S VALERIE. YOU CAN SIT DOWN.
O...KAY.
I TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT HAPPENED. I...
I ACTUALLY WANT TO THANK YOU. WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET THAT GUY FOR MONTHS. HE'S BEEN HARASSING A LOT OF OUR MALE CUSTOMERS.
BUT SINCE YOU INSIST...
I'M UNDERSTAFFED TODAY, SO IF YOU HELP REPAIR THE DAMAGE WHEN THE PARAMEDICS LEAVE, YOUR MEAL IS FREE.
THAT'S IT?
IF I WANTED TO PUNISH YOU, I'VE GOT MORE CREATIVE WAYS TO TORTURE YOU, SOME YOU MAY EVEN ENJOY.

I HAVE NO CLUE HOW TO DO THIS, SO...
DON'T WORRY. I JUST NEED YOU TO HOLD EVERYTHING IN POSITION WHILE I FASTEN IT AGAIN.
HEAVIER THAN IT LOOKS. YOU'VE DONE THIS BEFORE?
RIGGED IT TO FALL OFF LIKE THAT. I WAS SICK OF THAT GUY CHASING OFF OUR CUSTOMERS.
REALLY, HAVE YOU CONSIDERED CALLING THE POLICE?
CALLING THE POLICE IS FOR WUSSIES. BESIDES, THIS IS MORE SATISFYING.
IF I DIDN'T LIKE THAT TRAIN OF THOUGHT, I'D BE SCARED.
YOU SHOULD SEE WHAT ELSE I RIGGED.
THE TESLA COIL ABOVE THE CASHIER STATION DOES WONDERS FOR ARMED ROBBERIES.

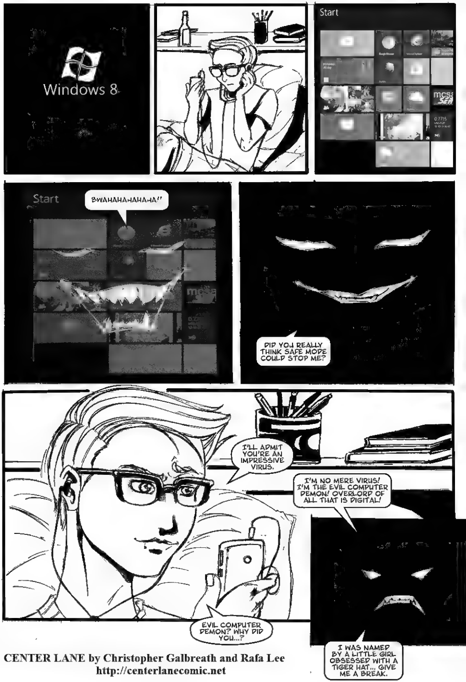
SO WHAT DO YOU DO FOR A LIVING?
IN HIGH SCHOOL. I'M TRYING TO FIND WORK, BUT I KEEP GETTING TURNED DOWN BECAUSE I'M 16.
REALLY, 16? THAT TAKES YOU OFF MY LIST OF POTENTIAL SEX PARTNERS TONIGHT.
WOW. YOU AND KYLE WOULD SO GET ALONG.
KYLE? AS IN KYLE STILES?
YES, HE'S MY ROOMMATE. WHY?
KYLE'S A FEATHER WEIGHT. YOU CAN LET GO BY THE WAY.
AND WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME SOONER?
TO SEE HOW LONG YOU COULD HOLD THAT POSITION. NICE ASS, BY THE WAY.

SO, WHEN CAN YOU START?
HUH?
FOR WORK, WHEN CAN YOU START?
OH, I'M OPEN TOMORROW. BUT WOULDN'T YOUR BOSSES BE AGAINST HIRING THE GUY THAT...
I AM MY BOSS, AND I VERY MUCH APPROVE. I OWN THIS DINER.
WOW... I DIDN'T KNOW.
BESIDES, I'D LIKE TO SCARE YOUR ROOMMATE WHEN HE FINDS OUT.
DO YOU MAKE ALL OF YOUR BUSINESS DECISIONS JUST FOR YOUR AMUSEMENT?
MOST OF THEM. YOU'D BE SURPRISED WHAT DRAWS IN BUSINESS NOWADAYS.

WHAT TOOK YOU SO... UH... HI, VAL.
WOW. YOU REALLY DO KNOW EACH OTHER.
INTIMATELY.
DUDE, I KNOW I KEEP SAYING YOU NEED TO GET LAID, BUT I WILL REPORT HER FOR STATUTORY RAPE.
CALM DOWN, KYLE. NOTHING HAPPENED.
I'LL GIVE HIM A YEAR BEFORE I JUMP HIM.
SO WHAT HAPPENED? OR SHOULD I BE AFRAID?
NOTHING HE DIDN'T ASK FOR.
HALF OF IT. THE REST WAS OVERKILL.
SO I FOUND OUT YOU WEREN'T BI. YOU STILL LIKED IT.
ONLY BECAUSE YOU STRADDLED MY LAP FOR...
FORGET I ASKED.

DINNER'S ON THE HOUSE SINCE DAVID HELPED REPAIR THE DAMAGE.
FOR ONCE HIS RESPONSIBILITY PAYS OFF.
ENJOY YOUR MEAL. I'LL SEE YOU AT NINE A.M. TOMORROW, DAVID.
SURE, I'LL BE HERE.
SHE... HIRED YOU?
YEAH, IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH THAT?
NOTHING. JUST AWKWARD THAT ONE OF MY ONE-NIGHT STANDS IS FUNDING HALF OF MY BILLS...
BETTER AN EX THAN MY MOTHER.
TOUCHE...

TEC
TEC
TEC
TEC
AM I INTERRUPTING?
WAIT...YOU'RE NOT FREAKING OUT?
BECAUSE I KNOW HOW TO GET RID OF A VIRUS...
WAIT! THAT WON'T---



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NEVER GONNA GIVE...YOU...UP...
STOP RICKROLLING ME!!!

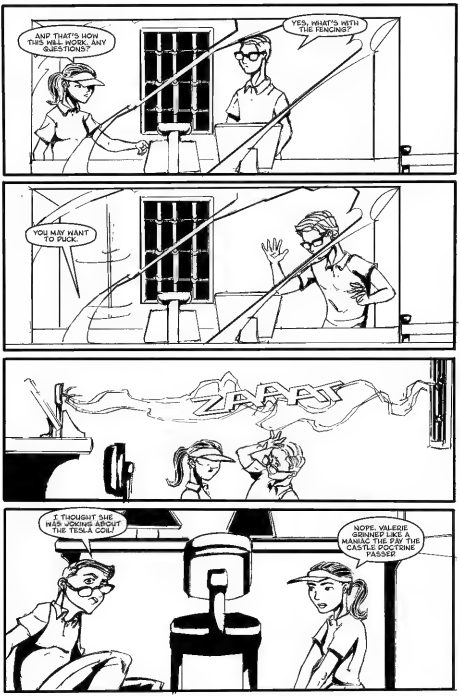
I'M SORRY TO BARGE IN BUT I REALLY NEEDED TO...
WHAT?
WOW
IF I HAD KNOWN ABOUT YOU, I'D HAVE ASKED KYLE FOR A THREE--
BAD IDEA. I'M 16.
NOW, I KNOW HOW THAT MAN THAT FLIRTED WITH ME IN HIGH SCHOOL FELT.
I BET HE NEVER REALIZED WHEN HE LOST HIS ERECTION.

HELLO?
I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
I HAVE SOME FORMS FOR YOU TO FILL OUT.
BUMP
OKAY, HOW MUCH DO I REALLY HAVE TO FILL OUT?
ONLY THE FIRST FIVE.
AND THE REST?
THINK YOU CAN TOSS THEM IN THE DUMPSTER OUT BACK FOR ME?

I GUESS YOU IMPRESSED HER ENOUGH LAST NIGHT.
I GUESS... DOES VALERIE ALWAYS DO THAT?
NOT REALLY. ONLY PEOPLE SHE LIKES. OR GUYS SHE WANTS TO FUCK.
WONDER WHICH CATEGORY I FALL IN.
FROM WHAT I KNOW OF YOU?
BOTH.
WHAT YOU KNOW OF ME?
YOU COME IN OFTEN ENOUGH, SO I CAN'T HELP BUT NOTICE. YOUR FRIEND HAS A CERTAIN CHARM, BUT YOU'RE SOMETHING ELSE.
YOU JUST ACCIDENTLY ADMITTED TO A CRUSH, DIDN'T YOU?
YES.
WOULD IT MAKE IT EASIER IF I ACTED LIKE A CLUELESS LOSER?
MAYBE...

HERE'S THE FORMS.
THANK YOU. AND THIS IS YOUR PAY RATE.
YOU DO REALIZE I'M JUST A HIGH SCHOOLER LOOKING FOR PART-TIME WORK, RIGHT?
YOU'LL NEED IT. BESIDES, YOU'LL MAKE IT WORTH EVERY PENNY.
THEN, HOW MUCH OF THIS IS FOR BEING EYE CANDY?
THAT'S PERSONAL INFORMATION I WISH TO MAKE YOU OBSESS OVER.

YOU'LL MOSTLY WORK AS EITHER A CASHIER OR HOST, BUT I MAY CALL YOU TO DO SOME CLEAN UP OR HEAVY LIFTING AS NEEDED.
FINE WITH ME.
STACY WILL TRAIN YOU ON THE ROUTINE WORK.
I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO DO ANYTHING ELSE WHEN I NEED TO.
OH...OKAY. NO PROBLEM.
SOUNDS GOOD.
WELL, THIS IS AWKWARD..
HOW SO?
YOU CAN STOP THE ACT NOW.
WHAT ACT?
AAAAAGGGGGGHHHHH!!!!



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SO, WHAT DID YOUR FRIEND DO AFTER I SHOT HIM DOWN?
WENT OFF TO THE BAR, FOUND SOME CHICK, TOOK HER HOME AND BANGED HER.
WOW...WHAT A PIG!
SOUNDS LIKE YOU TAKE THAT IN STRIDE.
PAR FOR THE COURSE.
AT LEAST HE'S HONEST ABOUT IT...
WHICH IS MORE THAN I CAN SAY FOR MY FOLKS.
LAST I CHECKED, LYING TO THEIR KIDS IS IN THE PARENTS' JOB DESCRIPTION.
REMIND ME NEVER TO HAVE KIDS, THEN.

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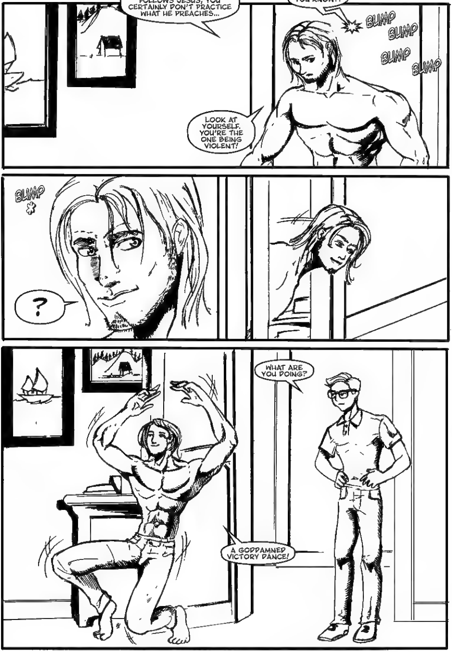
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?!
FAILING MISERABLY.
WAIT, YOU'RE THE NEW GUY? YOU OKAY?
ONLY THING HURT IS WHAT'S LEFT OF MY PRIDE.
WELL, AT LEAST YOU DODGED THOSE CHILDREN NICELY. THAT COULD'VE HAPPENED TO ANYONE.
IT'S STILL COMING OUT OF MY PAYCHECK.
YOU KIDDING? THIS IS WORTH PAYING FOR REPLACEMENT DISHES.



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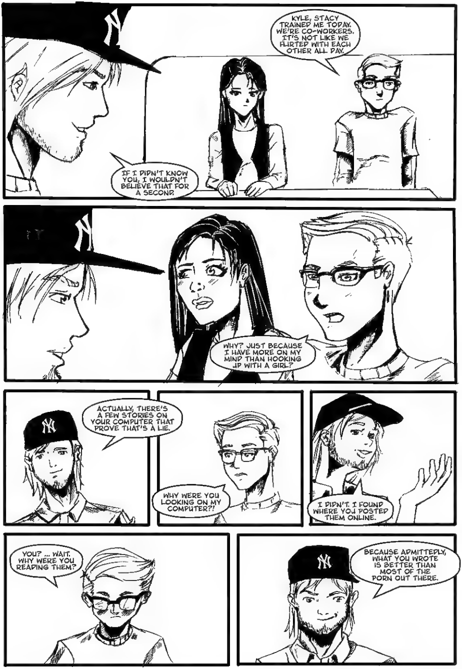
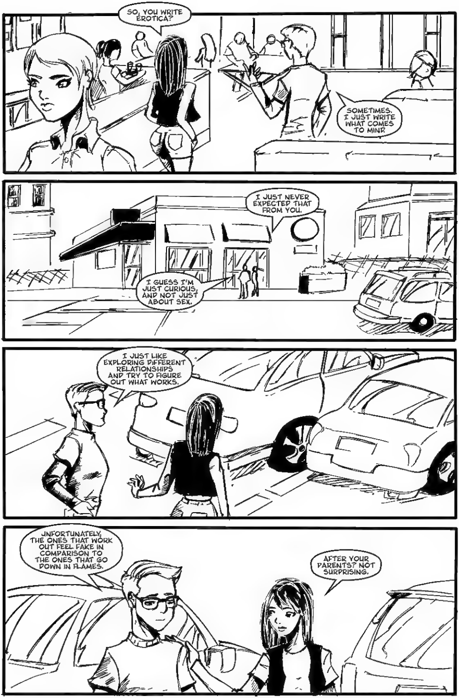
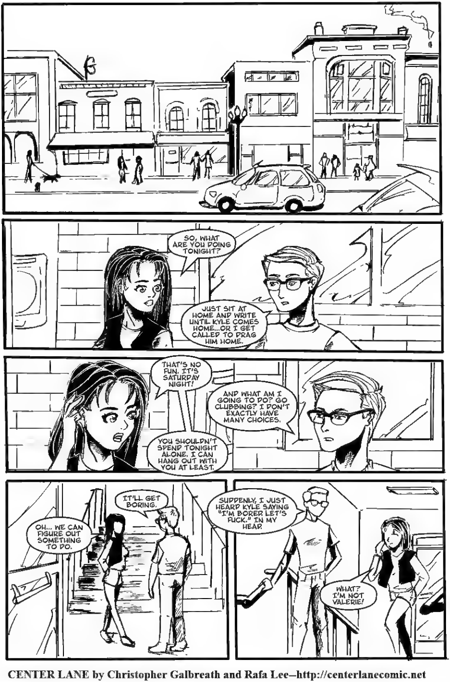
OKAY, MAYBE THIS PLACE WAS A MISTAKE.
YOU'RE TELLING ME. NO BEER HERE?
ALL THE SCREAMING KIDS AND THAT'S WHAT BOTHERS YOU?
HEY, I'M NOT THE ONE THAT HAD TO DEAL WITH A BUSY RESTAURANT ALL DAY.
HI, DAVID!
STACY?
YOU TOTALLY OUTMANEUVERED ME, YOU SON OF A BITCH!
WHAT IS HE TALKING ABOUT?
SOMETHING HE KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT.


KYLE, STACY TRAINED ME TODAY. WE'RE CO-WORKERS. IT'S NOT LIKE WE FLIRTED WITH EACH OTHER ALL DAY.
IF I DIDN'T KNOW YOU, I WOULDN'T BELIEVE THAT FOR A SECOND.
WHY? JUST BECAUSE I HAVE MORE ON MY MIND THAN HOOKING UP WITH A GIRL?
ACTUALLY, THERE'S A FEW STORIES ON YOUR COMPUTER THAT PROVE THAT'S A LIE.
WHY WERE YOU LOOKING ON MY COMPUTER?!
I DIDN'T. I FOUND WHERE YOU POSTED THEM ONLINE.
YOU? ... WAIT. WHY WERE YOU READING THEM?
BECAUSE ADMITTEDLY, WHAT YOU WROTE IS BETTER THAN MOST OF THE PORN OUT THERE.

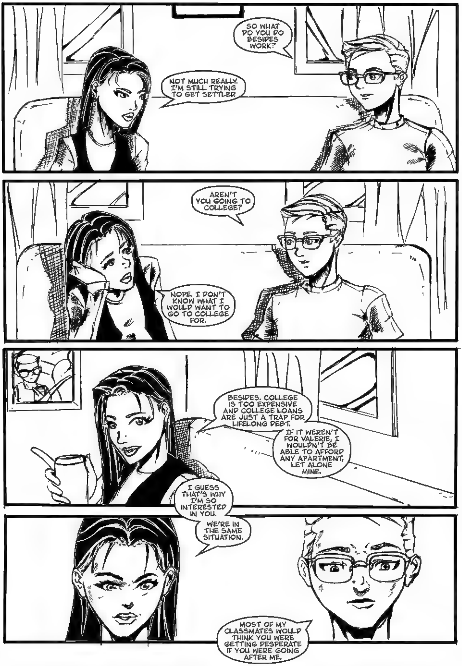
WELL, I'LL LEAVE YOU TWO LOVEBIRDS ALONE. I GOT SOME BARS CALLING MY NAME.
WE'RE NOT... GAH... NEVER MIND.
SEE YOU LATER.
SORRY ABOUT THAT. KYLE'S A GOOD MAN, BUT HE CAN REALLY BE AN ASS.
HE WAS JUST HAVING FUN.
WHAT'S SO WRONG ABOUT DATING?
IT'S NOT THAT. I JUST HAVE A LOT GOING ON.
BESIDES, IF MY PARENTS' 20 YEARS OF MARRIAGE ENDED AS UGLY AS IT DID, WHAT MAKES ME THINK I'LL DO ANY BETTER?
WAS IT REALLY THAT BAD?
THE BAILIFF BROKE THEM UP REPEATEDLY, CONFISCATED AT LEAST TEN SHIVS, AND THE VIDEO OF IT ALL RANKED #1 ON YOUTUBE FOR SEVERAL WEEKS.


SO, YOU WRITE EROTICA?
SOMETIMES. I JUST WRITE WHAT COMES TO MIND.
I JUST NEVER EXPECTED THAT FROM YOU.
I GUESS I'M JUST CURIOUS, AND NOT JUST ABOUT SEX.
I JUST LIKE EXPLORING DIFFERENT RELATIONSHIPS AND TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHAT WORKS.
UNFORTUNATELY, THE ONES THAT WORK OUT FEEL FAKE IN COMPARISON TO THE ONES THAT GO DOWN IN FLAMES.
AFTER YOUR PARENTS? NOT SURPRISING.


SO, WHAT ARE YOU DOING TONIGHT?
JUST SIT AT HOME AND WRITE UNTIL KYLE COMES HOME...OR I GET CALLED TO DRAG HIM HOME.
THAT'S NO FUN. IT'S SATURDAY NIGHT!
AND WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? GO CLUBBING? I DON'T EXACTLY HAVE MANY CHOICES.
YOU SHOULDN'T SPEND TONIGHT ALONE. I CAN HANG OUT WITH YOU AT LEAST.
IT'LL GET BORING.
OH... WE CAN FIGURE OUT SOMETHING TO DO.
SUDDENLY, I JUST HEARD KYLE SAYING "I'M BORED LET'S FUCK." IN MY HEAD.
WHAT? I'M NOT VALERIE!

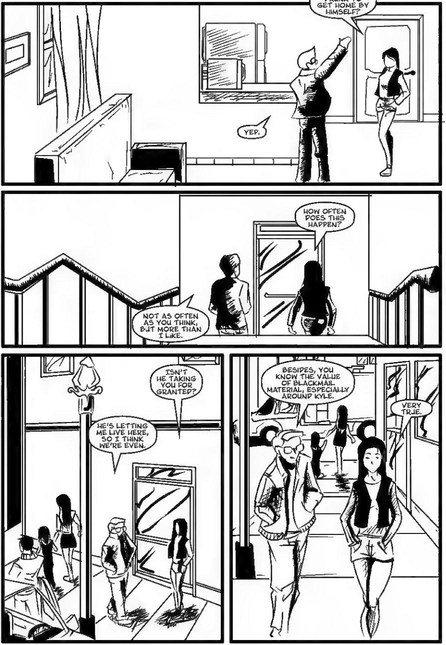
WOW. WHAT AN ENTERTAINMENT CENTER.
IT'S ALL KYLE'S. I DON'T USUALLY TOUCH IT.
WHAT DOES KYLE DO ANYWAY?
KYLE? HE...
I JUST REALIZED I HAVE NO CLUE WHAT KYLE DOES. AND THAT'S A VERY BAD THING.

SORRY FOR BEING A BORING HOST.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. GOT HOMEWORK?
NO, JUST SOME WRITING.
I WAS CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT YOU WROTE.
I DON'T KNOW. YOU MIGHT FIND THE STUFF BORING.
WOW! DAVID, WHO'S THE HOT CHICK?
BOW CHICKA WOW--
ON SECOND THOUGHT...
SLAM
OW!!!


SO WHAT DO YOU DO BESIDES WORK?
NOT MUCH REALLY. I'M STILL TRYING TO GET SETTLED.
AREN'T YOU GOING TO COLLEGE?
NOPE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE FOR.
BESIDES, COLLEGE IS TOO EXPENSIVE AND COLLEGE LOANS ARE JUST A TRAP FOR LIFELONG DEBT.
IF IT WEREN'T FOR VALERIE, I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO AFFORD ANY APARTMENT, LET ALONE MINE.
I GUESS THAT'S WHY I'M SO INTERESTED IN YOU.
WE'RE IN THE SAME SITUATION.
MOST OF MY CLASSMATES WOULD THINK YOU WERE GETTING DESPERATE IF YOU WERE GOING AFTER ME.

THAT'S NOT FAIR. I'M ACTUALLY SURPRISE YOU DON'T HAVE A GIRLFRIEND.
I'M A SOCIAL DUD IN HIGH SCHOOL.
I TEND TO BRUSH OFF MOST ATTRACTION TO ME. I'M USED TO GIRLS ONLY FAKING IT FOR A LAUGH.
THAT'S NOT FAIR TO ANYONE THAT IS INTERESTED.
THAT'S THE WAY IT GOES. SURE, A FEW OF KYLE'S LESS CHOOSY ONE-NIGHT STANDS FLIRT WITH ME, BUT THEY'RE EASY TO TURN DOWN WHEN THEY REALIZE THEY COULD END UP IN PRISON OVER ME.
WHAT ABOUT VALERIE?
RIGHT... STUPID QUESTION.

DON'T GET ME WRONG. I'D LOVE A GIRLFRIEND. YOU, ESPECIALLY.
WHAT'S HOLDING YOU BACK?
AFTER WITNESSING MY PARENTS' MARRIAGE CRASH HARDER THAN KYLE GETTING SHOT DOWN, WHAT MAKES ME THINK I CAN DO BETTER?
I fill you up
KYLE
Accept
Decline
HELLO?
SPEAK OF THE DEVIL.
I'LL BE THERE SOON, RODNEY.


KYLE'S TOO DRUNK TO GET HOME BY HIMSELF?
YEP.
HOW OFTEN DOES THIS HAPPEN?
NOT AS OFTEN AS YOU THINK, BUT MORE THAN I LIKE.
ISN'T HE TAKING YOU FOR GRANTED?
HE'S LETTING ME LIVE HERE, SO I THINK WE'RE EVEN.
BESIDES, YOU KNOW THE VALUE OF BLACKMAIL MATERIAL, ESPECIALLY AROUND KYLE.
VERY TRUE.

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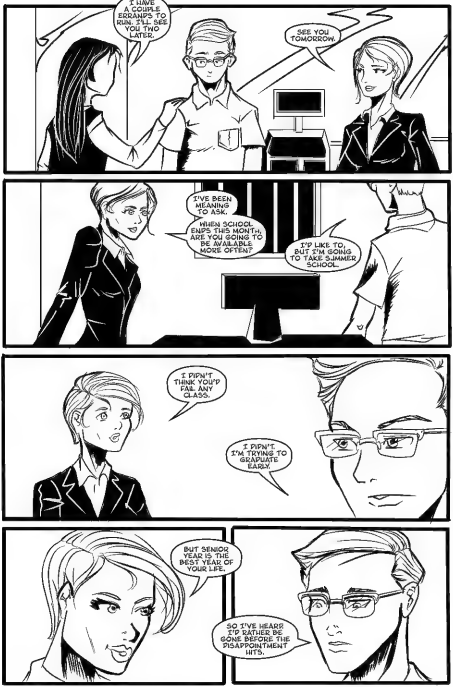
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO WAIT HERE.
I WANTED TO.
KYLE'S ASLEEP. I'M IN CLEAN CLOTHES AGAIN. AT LEAST, THERE'S THAT.
YOU'VE HAD AN EVENTFUL DAY.
LISTEN, DAVID. I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT A GIRLFRIEND AND ALL, BUT I STILL WANT TO SPEND TIME WITH YOU, WHETHER IT TURNS ROMANTIC OR NOT.
YOU MUST GET PRETTY BORED AT HOME IF YOU WANT TO HANG OUT WITH ME.
YOUR CLASSMATES DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE MISSING.

URGH... WHAT A HEADACHE.
?
click
click

HMMM?
SHIT...
STACY. WE GOTTA GET TO WORK.
I'M OFF TODAY. LET ME SLEEP A LITTLE LONGER.
I STILL HAVE WORK.
YOU'RE TOO COMFORTABLE. VALERIE WILL UNDERSTAND IF YOU'RE LATE...
IT'S WHAT SHE'LL ASSUME THAT WORRIES ME.

WEREN'T YOU OFF OF WORK TODAY?
I HAD TO PICK SOMETHING UP ANYWAY.
CUTTING IT CLOSE, DAVID?
SORRY, VAL. IT WAS MY FAULT.
OH, YOU TWO HAD A FUN NIGHT? I THINK I COULD LET THAT SLIDE.
BUT...WE... DIDN'T...
DAVID, JUST QUIT WHILE YOU'RE AHEAD...

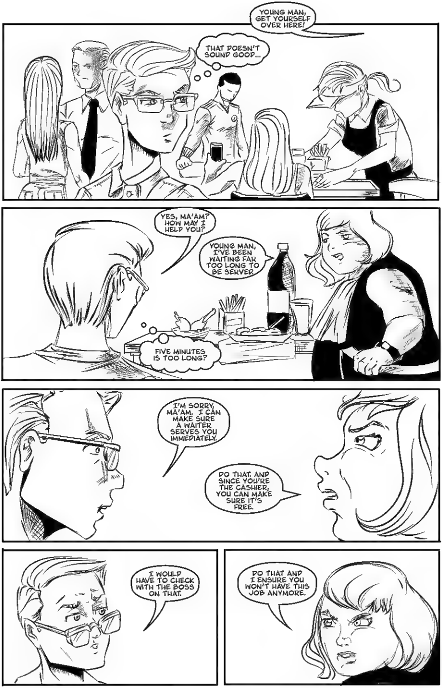

I HAVE A COUPLE ERRANDS TO RUN. I'LL SEE YOU TWO LATER.
SEE YOU TOMORROW.
I'VE BEEN MEANING TO ASK.
WHEN SCHOOL ENDS THIS MONTH, ARE YOU GOING TO BE AVAILABLE MORE OFTEN?
I'D LIKE TO, BUT I'M GOING TO TAKE SUMMER SCHOOL.
I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D FAIL ANY CLASS.
I DIDN'T. I'M TRYING TO GRADUATE EARLY.
BUT SENIOR YEAR IS THE BEST YEAR OF YOUR LIFE.
SO I'VE HEARD. I'D RATHER BE GONE BEFORE THE DISAPPOINTMENT HITS.

MART
???
DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE YOU HERE.
STACY! UHH... YEAH. ACTUALLY, GETTING SOMETHING FOR DAVID.
REALLY? WHAT COULD HE WANT FRAMED?
IT'S A SURPRISE. THE PICTURE'S GETTING PRINTED RIGHT NOW.
DID VALERIE ASK YOU TO PRINT OUT THE PICTURE OF DAVID'S WIPEOUT FROM YESTERDAY?
WHAT WIPEOUT? THIS I HAVE TO SEE.

SERIOUSLY, KYLE. WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO BLACKMAIL HIM WITH?
NOTHING. WHY WOULD I BLACKMAIL HIM?
THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO KNOW.
GIVE ME ONE GOOD REASON I SHOULDN'T RIP THIS PICTURE TO SHREDS.
FOR ONE, I CAN REPRINT IT STILL.
NOT HELPING...

IF YOU CAN CALM DOWN, LET ME EXPLAIN.
IT BETTER BE WORTH A LOT MORE THAN THAT CLICHÉ.
I'M TRYING TO ENCOURAGE THE GUY, STACY. IT MAY NOT LOOK LIKE IT, BUT HE HAS A LOT OF CONFIDENCE ISSUES.
"HE HIDES BEHIND A LOT OF SARCASM AND TWISTED LOGIC."
"IT'S BECOME AN AUTOMATIC DEFENSE TO HIM TO MOCK SOMETHING AS STUPID SO NO ONE WOULD BLAME HIM FOR BACKING OUT OF ANYTHING."
HE REFUSES TO TAKE CHANCES ANY GUY WOULD JUMP AT, LET ALONE ANYONE HIS AGE.
AND HOW DOES THIS HELP?
A LOT OF GIRLS HAVE COME INTO MY APARTMENT.
UNTIL LAST NIGHT, I WAS THE ONLY ONE BRINGING THEM IN.

BELIEVE ME. DAVID'S THE CLOSEST THING TO A LITTLE BROTHER I GOT.
I STILL THINK THIS IS LOW.
I MAY JOKE AROUND WITH HIM, BUT THE LAST THING I WANT TO DO IS HURT HIM, ESPECIALLY USING YOU.
YOU'RE THE BEST THING THAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM FOR A LONG WHILE NOW.
I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE YOU'RE TRYING TO SET ME UP WITH HIM.
YOU'RE DOING THAT YOURSELVES. I TRIED TO HIT ON YOU FIRST, REMEMBER?
THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE WAS PRICELESS.


YOUNG MAN, GET YOURSELF OVER HERE!
THAT DOESN'T SOUND GOOD...
YES, MA'AM? HOW MAY I HELP YOU?
YOUNG MAN, I'VE BEEN WAITING FAR TOO LONG TO BE SERVED.
FIVE MINUTES IS TOO LONG?
I'M SORRY, MA'AM. I CAN MAKE SURE A WAITER SERVES YOU IMMEDIATELY.
DO THAT. AND SINCE YOU'RE THE CASHIER, YOU CAN MAKE SURE IT'S FREE.
I WOULD HAVE TO CHECK WITH THE BOSS ON THAT.
DO THAT AND I ENSURE YOU WON'T HAVE THIS JOB ANYMORE.

MA'AM, YOU KNOW MY BOSS WON'T GET RID OF ME FOR FOLLOWING PROCEDURES.
I DON'T CARE. I HOLD MORE WEIGHT THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE HERE.
TELL ME THAT WAS SAID IRONICALLY...
YOU'RE THE MOST EXPENDABLE PERSON HERE. YOUNG, WHITE, MALE. ARE YOU GAY?
NO.
NOT THAT IT'S YOUR BUSINESS...
THEN, YOU HAVE NO GROUND FOR WRONGFUL TERMINATION.
NONE. BESIDES, YOU'RE IN COLLEGE ANYWAY, RIGHT?
HIGH SCHOOL, ACTUALLY.
WOW, YOU REALLY ARE A BIGGER DUMB ASS THAN I THOUGHT.
URGE TO KILL... RISING.

ARE YOU HARASSING MY EMPLOYEE?
FINALLY, SOMEONE THAT CAN GET THINGS DONE.
YOUR SERVICE SUCKS AND IS SLOWER THAN SNAILS.
INEXCUSABLE.
WELL, SORRY FOR BEING BUSY.
FIRST YOU WILL GET RID OF THIS IDIOT.
I'LL MAKE THAT DECISION.
NO, YOU WON'T. YOU'LL DO IT. ALSO, FOR THE POOR SERVICE, MY MEAL IS FREE.
AND IF I DECIDE TO THROW YOU OUT INSTEAD?
I HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO BURY YOUR BUSINESS AND EVERYONE THAT WORKS HERE.

I SEE WHAT THIS IS, DAVID. JUST SIT DOWN.
BUT...
I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU OVER HERE, MA'AM.
TAKING THIS WHERE EVERYONE CAN SEE? IS EVERYONE HERE BEYOND STUPID?
WHAT IS SHE DOING?
WAIT A SEC...
ZAAAAT
THE TESLA COIL!

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO...
I DIDN'T. I ONLY STUNNED HER.
NOW, CALL THE POLICE OR SHE'LL REALLY SHUT US DOWN.
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
SHE'S A SCAM ARTIST WITH CONNECTIONS IN HIGH PLACES.
SOME OF THE LOCAL BUSINESSES HAVE CLOSED BECAUSE OF HER.
THE POLICE ARE GONNA HAVE A FIELD DAY WITH HER.

WHA... HAPPENED?
YOU'RE UNDER ARREST. YOU TRIED TO SCAM THE WRONG OWNER.
WHAT PROOF DO YOU HAVE?
BESIDES THE OBVIOUS RECORDINGS? MULTIPLE EYEWITNESSES.
AT LEAST TWENTY CURRENT AND FORMER BUSINESS OWNERS ARE PRESSING CHARGES.
THEY WOULDN'T. THEY DON'T HAVE THE GUTS.
BUT I DO. AND THERE'S ENOUGH TO PUT YOU AWAY FOR A LONG TIME WITHOUT ME PRESSING CHARGES.

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Way to go, Dave!
- Kyle
KYLE MAKES IT HARD TO GET PISSED AT HIM SOMETIMES.

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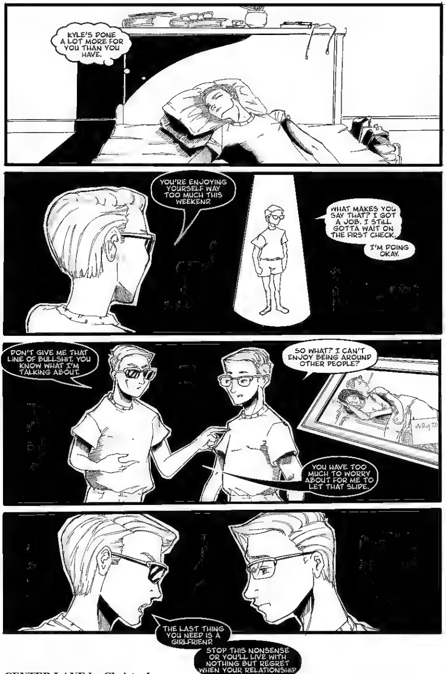
I DO THE SAME THING I DID FOR YOUR DAD.
"IT'S NOTHING GLAMOROUS, JUST ADMINISTRATIVE AND ASSISTANT WORK MOSTLY."
"IT PAYS WELL, AT LEAST. I COULD SUPPORT YOU ON MY PAY UNTIL YOU'RE OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL IF YOU WANTED."
"YOU'RE JUST TOO STUBBORN."
BESIDES, I GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH SOME PRETTY HOT LADIES.
FROM YOU, THAT'S ALL I NEED TO HEAR TO BELIEVE YOU HAVING THAT KIND OF WORK.



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I CAN'T BELIEVE IDIOTS BELIEVE THAT SIGN MAKES THIS PLACE SAFE.
NEVER MIND THE SIGN SCREAMING 'FREE TARGET'. THERE'S MORE THREATS AT SCHOOLS THAN JUST GUNS.
SCHOOLS AREN'T SAFE. NEVER HAVE BEEN, NEVER WILL BE.
CASE IN POINT...
HA! HA! HA! HA!

NO PROOF IT WASN'T AN ACCIDENT. BETTER JUST...
SERIOUSLY?!
MANUEL. NOT SURPRISED.
AGAIN, MAN? YOU GOTTA QUIT DROPPING YOUR GLASSES.
THE INSURANCE COMPANY HAS THREATENED TO STOP REPLACING THESE BECAUSE OF YOU BOZOS.
AND WHOSE FAULT IS THAT?

DAVID, WHERE'S YOUR...?
AGAIN?!
HA!
HA!
HA!
HA!
HA!
HA!
DO YOU NEED TO SEE...
NO POINT. THERE WAS NO PROOF THAT IT WASN'T AN ACCIDENT.
BESIDES, IF I WENT TO THE COUNSELOR EVERY TIME THIS HAPPENED, I'D NEVER GET ANYTHING DONE.

SO FORM LETTERS MAKE IT EASIER FOR COMPANIES TO SEND MASS LETTERS TO THEIR CUSTOMERS.
ONCE THE DATABASE IS SET UP AND YOU PLUG THE FIELDS YOU NEED INTO YOUR LETTER, YOU CAN PERFORM A MAIL MERGE THAT WILL AUTOMATICALLY PLUG IN THE DATA OF EACH FIELD.
tec tec tec tec
tec tec tec tec
tec tec tec
tec tec
tec tec tec
tec tec
SO...WHO CAN TELL ME HOW TO MAIL MERGE.
BESIDES MR. RAMSEY.
HEY, ASK QUESTION, GET ANSWER.

NOT EVEN THROUGH FIRST PERIOD AND CAN'T WAIT FOR THE DAY TO BE OVER.
!
WELL, THAT CAME OUT OF NOWHERE.
I SWEAR! ALL I DID WAS CLICK SAVE!!

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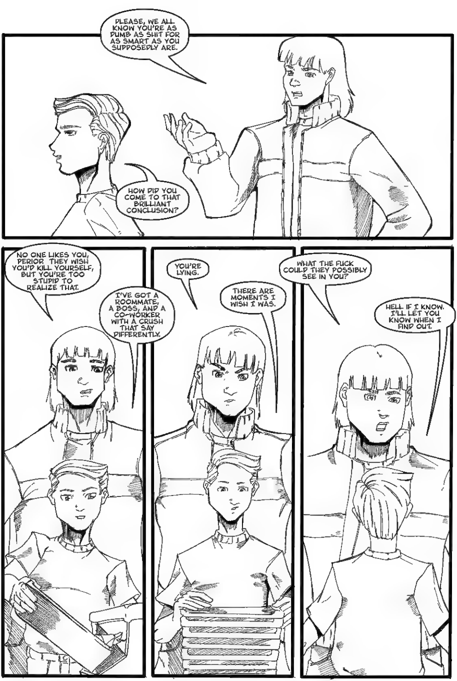
HEY, DAVID! YOU HEAR THE RUMORS?
WHAT NOW?
RUMOR HAS IT THERE'S A THREAT OF A SCHOOL SHOOTING TOMORROW.
FIRST I HEARD ABOUT IT.
I'M NOT SURPRISED CONSIDERING PEOPLE SAY YOU MADE THE THREAT.
AND YOU'RE REALLY DUMB ENOUGH TO BELIEVE THAT?
OH, RIGHT. THIS IS THE GUY THAT BELIEVED CLICKING "SAVE" WAS ABOUT TO BLOW HIS COMPUTER UP.

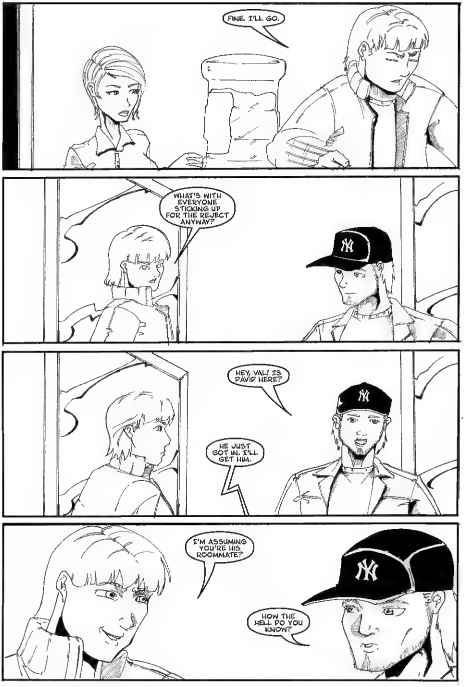

PLEASE, WE ALL KNOW YOU'RE AS DUMB AS SHIT FOR AS SMART AS YOU SUPPOSEDLY ARE.
HOW DID YOU COME TO THAT BRILLIANT CONCLUSION?
NO ONE LIKES YOU, PERIOR. THEY WISH YOU'D KILL YOURSELF, BUT YOU'RE TOO STUPID TO REALIZE THAT.
I'VE GOT A ROOMMATE, A BOSS, AND A CO-WORKER WITH A CRUSH THAT SAY DIFFERENTLY.
YOU'RE LYING.
THERE ARE MOMENTS I WISH I WAS.
WHAT THE FUCK COULD THEY POSSIBLY SEE IN YOU?
HELL IF I KNOW. I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN I FIND OUT.

FINALLY OUT OF THAT HELL HOLE.
WHOEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO CRAM THOUSANDS OF TEENAGERS IN A BUILDING NEEDS TO BE SHOT... REPEATEDLY.
SERIOUSLY, MANUEL?
SOMEONE HAS TO PUT YOU BACK IN YOUR PLACE!

WHATEVER. I GOTTA GET TO WORK.
OH, SURE... EXCUSES.
FOLLOW IF YOU WANT.
FUCK YES, I AM!
I'M NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONSEQUENCES THOUGH.
LIKE I'M SCARED OF A NERD.
IT'S NOT ME YOU SHOULD BE AFRAID OF.
HI, DAVID. IS THIS A FRIEND OF YOURS?
NOPE. JUST A STALKER. FEEL FREE TO USE THE TESLA COIL ON HIM.
THE WHAT COIL?

I TOLD YOU I HAD WORK.
SHE WASN'T THE 'CRUSH', WAS SHE?
NOPE. VALERIE IS EASILY THE SCARIEST BUSINESS OWNER I CAN THINK OF.
EVEN THEN, SHE'S TOO HOT NOT TO GAWK AT HER ALL THE TIME. ARE YOU GAY OR SOMETHING?
HI, DAVID!
HI, STACY. ARE YOU WORKING TONIGHT?
JUST GOT OFF. I GOTTA RUN AN ERRAND.
WHO'S THE BRAT?
AN ANNOYANCE VALERIE SHOULD BE CHASING OUT SOON...
ANY HOT GUY WOULD WANT YOU AND YOU WANT THIS LOSER?!

I GOTTA GO.
SEE YA.
YOU HAVEN'T LEARNED YOUR PLACE.
WELL, THE REAL WORLD DOESN'T GO BY HIGH SCHOOL STANDARDS. GET OVER IT.
IT SHOULD.
FINE. NOW, IF YOU EXCUSE ME, I GOT WORK.
OH, NO, YOU DON'T! GET BACK HERE!
IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO ORDER SOMETHING, I SUGGEST YOU LEAVE.


FINE. I'LL GO.
WHAT'S WITH EVERYONE STICKING UP FOR THE REJECT ANYWAY?
HEY, VAL! IS DAVID HERE?
HE JUST GOT IN. I'LL GET HIM.
I'M ASSUMING YOU'RE HIS ROOMMATE?
HOW THE HELL DO YOU KNOW?

GREAT, NOW HE'S MET EVERYONE.
IS HE A...?
NO...
MANUEL, JUST LEAVE ALREADY.
WE'RE DISCUSSING THIS TOMORROW.
NOTHING TO DISCUSS.
WHATEVER. SEE YOU TOMORROW.
LOOKING FORWARD TO THAT.
WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?
YOU'RE ASKING THE WRONG GUY ABOUT THAT.

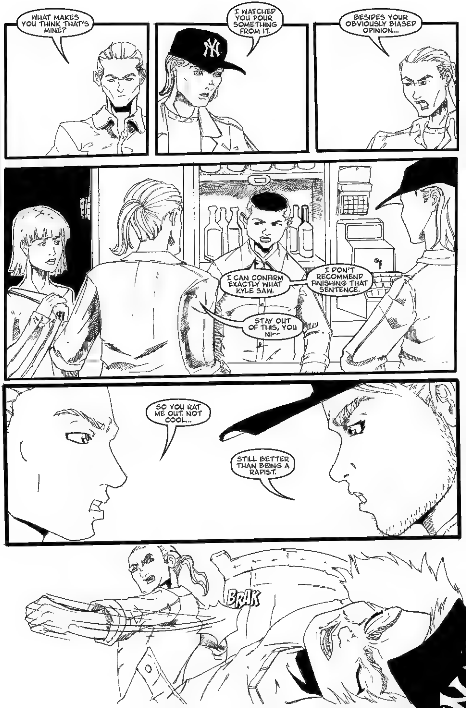
SO WHAT DO YOU NEED?
I WAS JUST COMING BY TO GIVE YOU SOME CASH FOR DINNER.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT.
DON'T GIVE ME THAT. YOU DO MORE THAN ENOUGH AS IS.
WHEN YOU GET OFF WORK, MEET ME AT RODNEY'S.
EXPECTING TO GET DRUNK AGAIN?
I JUST WANT TO CHAT, BUT CAN'T MAKE ANY PROMISES ON MY SOBRIETY.

HEY, RODNEY!
WHAT'S UP, KYLE?
WAITING ON DAVID HERE.
MIGHT AS WELL. IT'S BEEN A SAUSAGE FEST TODAY, SO YOU AREN'T HOOKING UP TONIGHT.
WASN'T PLANNING TO. I JUST WANT TO TALK TO HIM. EASE SOME OF HIS CONCERNS.
SPOKE TOO SOON.
AAAWWW
OH, QUIT SCARING THE LADY, GUYS!
JUST GIVE US A CHANCE FOR ONCE, KYLE!

VODKA, PLEASE.
NO PROBLEM.
THANKS FOR CALLING OFF THE WOLVES.
I'M JUST AS SICK OF IT AS YOU ARE. GIVES GUYS LIKE ME A BAD NAME.
ARE YOU SOME PICK UP ARTIST, TOO?
JUST SOMEONE OUT TO ENJOY HIMSELF. IF A LADY WANTS TO JOIN, IT'S FINE WITH ME.
TYPICAL...
SO TONIGHT?
ANY OTHER NIGHT, I'D AGREE, BUT I'M WAITING ON A FRIEND.

IF THE STIFF HERE DOESN'T FEEL LIKE PLEASING YOU, I...
BUZZ OFF.
WHAT? YOU'RE GOING FOR THE WOMANIZER, BUT NOT ME?
I DON'T HAVE TO ANSWER TO YOU.
YOU'LL EVENTUALLY COME AROUND.
KYLE, WHAT THE HELL?!

WHAT WAS...
I'LL REPLACE YOUR DRINK. ONE MOMENT...
SO WHAT? I CAN'T PLAY MY GAME IN YOUR PRESENCE?
I FIND YOUR TACTICS QUESTIONABLE.
THE WOMAN SAID "NO". THAT'S YOUR CUE TO MOVE ON.
LIKE YOU'RE ANY BETTER THAN ME.
AT LEAST, I DON'T NEED TO DRUG WOMEN TO GET SOME.


WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THAT'S MINE?
I WATCHED YOU POUR SOMETHING FROM IT.
BESIDES YOUR OBVIOUSLY BIASED OPINION...
I CAN CONFIRM EXACTLY WHAT KYLE SAW.
STAY OUT OF THIS, YOU NI--
I DON'T RECOMMEND FINISHING THAT SENTENCE.
SO YOU RAT ME OUT. NOT COOL...
STILL BETTER THAN BEING A RAPIST.
BRAK

SIR, PLEASE LEAVE THE PREMESIS.
LIKE HELL!
BLUMP
SIR, YOU ARE NO LONGER WELCOME HERE. GOOD NIGHT

YOU OKAY, KYLE?
JUST SURPRISED.
YOUR NEXT ROUNDS ARE ON THE HOUSE. THANKS FOR THE HELP, KYLE.
THANK YOU.
JUST HATE GUYS LIKE HIM.
ANY OTHER NIGHT, I MIGHT HAVE HAD THE SAME GOAL AS HIM.
MAYBE, BUT EVEN THEN, YOU SEEM LIKE A FUN LAY.

THERE'S DAVID.
STRANGE...
WHAT?
YOU LOOK UNDERAGE, BUT YOU DON'T ACT LIKE IT.
BECAUSE I AM UNDERAGE?
YOU ALLOW A HIGH SCHOOLER IN HERE?
IS HE CONSUMING ALCOHOL?
NOPE...
THEN, HE'S FINE.

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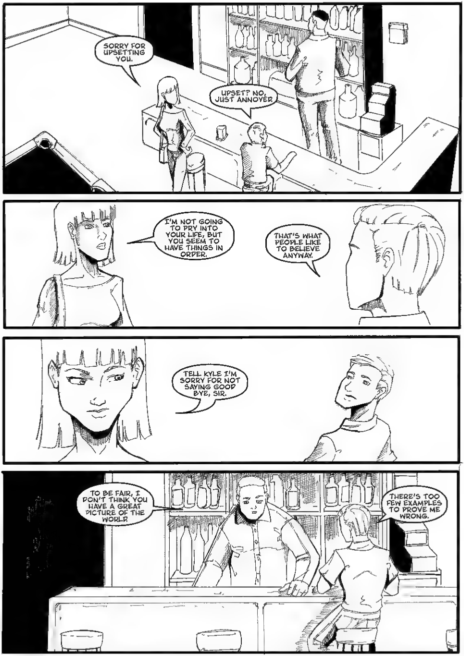
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I HAVEN'T...
PEOPLE REACT THE SAME WHENEVER THEY FIND OUT MY AGE.
THEY ASK ME THE SAME QUESTIONS YOU DID. SO-CALLED PROFESSIONALS ARE WORSE.
TO BE FAIR, YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T BE HERE...
I AGREE, BUT KYLE ASKED ME TO, AND I'VE TURNED DOWN RODNEY'S INVITATIONS SEVERAL TIMES.
SOMETIMES I WONDER WHO I HAVE TO PROVE FOR EMANCIPATION, THE JUDGE OR PEOPLE LIKE YOU.


SORRY FOR UPSETTING YOU.
UPSET? NO, JUST ANNOYED.
I'M NOT GOING TO PRY INTO YOUR LIFE, BUT YOU SEEM TO HAVE THINGS IN ORDER.
THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE LIKE TO BELIEVE ANYWAY.
TELL KYLE I'M SORRY FOR NOT SAYING GOOD BYE, SIR.
TO BE FAIR, I DON'T THINK YOU HAVE A GREAT PICTURE OF THE WORLD.
THERE'S TOO FEW EXAMPLES TO PROVE ME WRONG.

WHERE DO YOU GET THIS IDEA?
A MIX OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND JUST BEING AWARE OF THE WORLD.
I WOULD HARDLY COUNT THE NEWS AS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE WORLD.
GOOD THINGS HAPPEN EVERYDAY, ABOUT AS MUCH AS THE BAD IF NOT MORE.
HOW COME I RARELY SEE IT?
"IT'S EASY TO BE BLINDED BY THE NEGATVE WHEN THAT'S ALL YOU SEE."
"YOU SEE A BUNCH OF GUYS GETTING DRUNK, I SEE GUYS RELAXING AND ENJOYING EACH OTHER'S COMPANY."
23
10
ONCE YOU'RE ABLE TO RELAX AND ENJOY YOURSELF, THE HARDSHIPS ARE NOTHING.
SO WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM ME?
NOTHING, I JUST WANT YOU TO RELAX BEFORE YOU START GETTING GRAY HAIR AT 20.

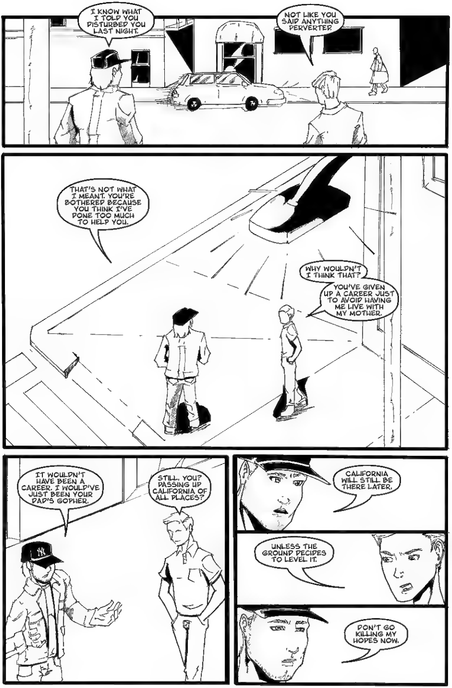
HEY, KID...
HUH?
MY PARTNER HAD TO LEAVE. WANNA SHOOT A GAME WITH ME?
UH...
JUST GO ENJOY YOURSELF FOR ONCE, DAVID
... OKAY.
HUH?
NOT BAD YOU MAY ACTUALLY BE A CHALLENGE.

HEY, RODNEY. WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
SOMEONE OFFERED HIM THE CHANCE TO PLAY.
LOOKS LIKE HE'S DOING PRETTY WELL.
HE'S HAD A DECENT UNDERSTANDING OF GAMES, EVEN SPORTS ON SOME LEVEL.
HE'S NO EXPERT BY ANY STRETCH.
AS LONG AS HE CAN LEARN TO HAVE A LITTLE FUN, THAT'S ALL HE'LL NEED TO SAVE HIS SANITY.
LOOKS LIKE IT'S ALMOST OVER THOUGH.
8

8-BALL CORNER POCKET.
TLIC
OOOOHHHHHHH...
THAT HAPPENS, KID. YOU'VE PLAYED BEFORE?
NOPE, FIRST TIME.
LIKE I BELIEVE THAT.

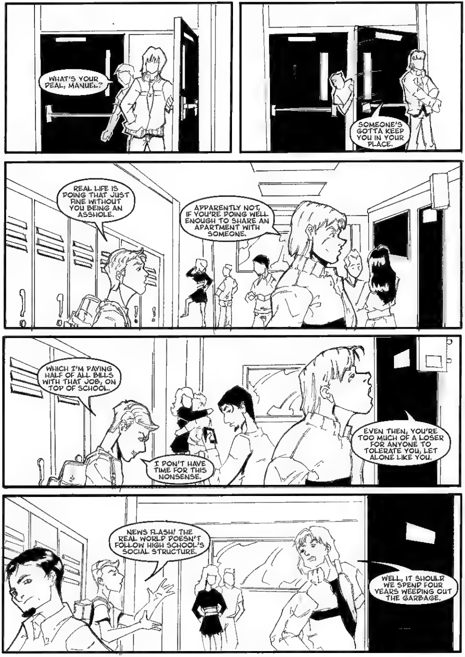
NOT BAD, DAVID.
KYLE! SORRY IF I KEPT YOU WAITING.
DON'T BE, BUT WE BETTER GET HOME.
WHO IS HE? YOUR KID BROTHER OR SOMETHING?
MIGHT AS WELL BE, BUT NO, JUST MY ROOMMATE.
WELL, COME BACK AGAIN SOMETIME, AND NOT JUST TO CARRY KYLE'S DRUNK ASS HOME.
HEY, I DON'T GET THAT DRUNK THAT OFTEN...

THIS FEELS ODD.
WHAT DOES?
LEAVING RODNEY'S WITHOUT YOU DRAPED OVER MY SHOULDER.
I'M GRATEFUL YOU DO THAT FOR ME, BUT YOU GOTTA ENJOY YOURSELF SOMETIME.
HOW CAN I ENJOY MYSELF WHEN I NEED TO STEP UP?
DON'T YOU DARE START THAT. YOU'VE BEEN DOING ENOUGH.
KYLE, YOU'VE DONE FAR MORE FOR ME THAN...
THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.


I KNOW WHAT I TOLD YOU DISTURBED YOU LAST NIGHT.
NOT LIKE YOU SAID ANYTHING PERVERTED.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT. YOU'RE BOTHERED BECAUSE YOU THINK I'VE DONE TOO MUCH TO HELP YOU.
WHY WOULDN'T I THINK THAT?
YOU'VE GIVEN UP A CAREER JUST TO AVOID HAVING ME LIVE WITH MY MOTHER.
IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN A CAREER. I WOULD'VE JUST BEEN YOUR DAD'S GOPHER.
STILL, YOU? PASSING UP CALIFORNIA OF ALL PLACES?
CALIFORNIA WILL STILL BE THERE LATER.
UNLESS THE GROUND DECIDES TO LEVEL IT.
DON'T GO KILLING MY HOPES NOW.

SO, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR GLASSES?
SOME ASSHOLE DECIDED THEY MAKE A GOOD FOOTREST.
AGAIN?!
I MIGHT AS WELL GIVE UP ON THEM. NO WAY INSURANCE WILL REPLACE THEM NOW.
BUT WITHOUT YOUR GLASSES?
I CAN STILL SEE WITHOUT THEM FINE.
BUT YOUR HEADACHES...
HOW DIFFERENT WILL IT BE THAN THE HEADACHES I DEAL WITH ANYWAY?

YOU HEARD DAVID WORKS AT THAT RESTAURANT ON...
YES, I DID. MAN, I LIKED THAT PLACE TOO
YEAH, I'M AVOIDING THAT PLACE LIKE THE PLAGUE NOW.
APPARENTLY HE SHARES AN APARTMENT WITH AN OLDER GUY, TOO.
SERIOUSLY? I CAN'T EVEN STAND BEING NEAR HIM FOR A SECOND!
HOW CAN ANYONE STAND LIVING WITH HIM?
PLUS, HE APPARENTLY GOT A GIRLFRIEND, TOO. SOME OLDER GIRL?
ARE YOU KIDDING ME?
EW...
I SEE WE GOT THE RUMOR MILL RUNNING EARLY THIS MORNING.
I HAVE NO EARTHLY IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

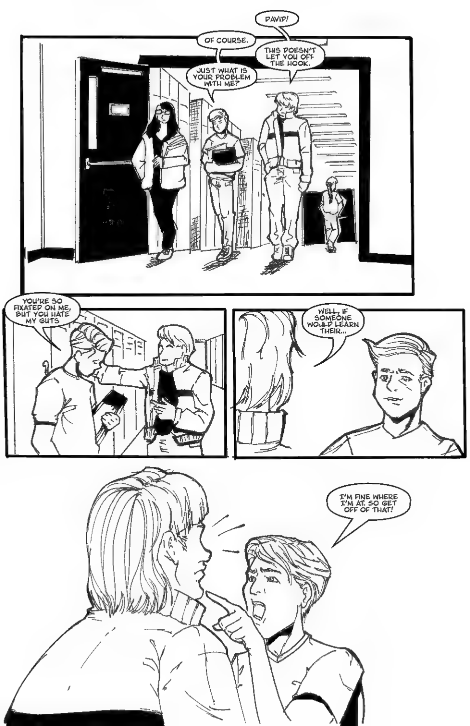

WHAT'S YOUR DEAL, MANUEL?
SOMEONE'S GOTTA KEEP YOU IN YOUR PLACE.
REAL LIFE IS DOING THAT JUST FINE WITHOUT YOU BEING AN ASSHOLE.
APPARENTLY NOT, IF YOU'RE DOING WELL ENOUGH TO SHARE AN APARTMENT WITH SOMEONE.
WHICH I'M PAYING HALF OF ALL BILLS WITH THAT JOB, ON TOP OF SCHOOL.
EVEN THEN, YOU'RE TOO MUCH OF A LOSER FOR ANYONE TO TOLERATE YOU, LET ALONE LIKE YOU.
I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS NONSENSE.
NEWS FLASH! THE REAL WORLD DOESN'T FOLLOW HIGH SCHOOL'S SOCIAL STRUCTURE.
WELL, IT SHOULD! WE SPEND FOUR YEARS WEEDING OUT THE GARBAGE.

YOU THINK IT'S EASY TO WEED ME OUT LIKE THAT?
JUST USE THE SAME TACTICS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL. IT'LL WORK EVENTUALLY.
KEEP THE USUAL RUMORS GOING AND EVENTUALLY PEOPLE WILL...
ACTUALLY, THAT WON'T WORK.
WHY?
FOR ONE, THERE'S TOO MANY PEOPLE FOR THAT TO WORK, I MIGHT NOT EVEN HEAR ABOUT IT OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL. AND TWO...
LET ME GUESS. ADULTS ARE 'MORE MATURE'.
ACTUALLY, NO. THEY'RE JUST AS PETTY, BUT ABOUT COMPLETELY DIFFERENT THINGS.

I MAY HAVE TALKED BIG TO MANUEL, BUT THIS IS STILL UNSETTLING.
BLAM
BLAM
LOOK OUT THE WINDOW HERE!
GET BACK IN YOUR ..
YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME...

WHAT AN IDIOT!
HUH... AND HERE I THOUGHT DAVID WAS GOING TO DO THAT.
HE PROBABLY WOULD HAVE FAILED WORSE THAN THAT...
EVERYONE! BACK TO YOUR SEATS NOW!
I THOUGHT THAT WAS JUST MANUEL TRYING TO RILE ME UP.
DID SOMEONE REALLY JUST...
MR. RAMSEY. EARTH TO DAVID!
ARE YOU OKAY?
OH, YES, SIR.
GOOD. AFTER THAT, A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN IS THE LAST THING I NEED.

OKAY, DAVID. CALM DOWN. IT'S NOT THAT BIG OF A DEAL.
THE IDIOT MANAGED TO GET A COUPLE OF SHOTS OFF, BUT MISSED HORRIBLY. NO ONE GOT HURT.
ON TOP OF THAT, YOU WERE FAR FROM IT AND IN NO IMMEDIATE DANGER. THE SECURITY DID THEIR JOB.
AND ON THE REALLY BIG PLUS SIDE, EVERYONE'S STOPPED TALKING ABOUT YOU. WE'LL SEE HOW LONG THAT LASTS.


OF COURSE.
DAVID!
THIS DOESN'T LET YOU OFF THE HOOK.
JUST WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM WITH ME?
YOU'RE SO FIXATED ON ME, BUT YOU HATE MY GUTS
WELL, IF SOMEONE WOULD LEARN THEIR...
I'M FINE WHERE I'M AT, SO GET OFF OF THAT!

OH, SURE. HIGH AND MIGHTY JUST BECAUSE YOU LIVE ON YOUR OWN.
JUST WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM WITH THAT...
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW LUCKY YOU HAVE IT. NO PARENTS. NO SIBLINGS TO COMPETE WITH. NO...
THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? THAT YOU HAVE A FULLY FUNCTIONAL FAMILY?
STOP WASTING MY TIME.
IT'S NOT A...
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT I'D GIVE TO EVEN HAVE HALF OF WHAT YOU'RE COMPLAINING ABOUT.

NOW?! OH, FOR THE LOVE OF...
WELL, KYLE. YOU TOLD ME SO...
MR. RAMSEY? ARE YOU OKAY?
NOTHING A TRUCKLOAD OF IBUPROFEN WON'T SOLVE.
I'LL BE...
YOU NEED TO GO TO THE NURSE.
THAT WASN'T A QUESTION.

GAH... ALMOST THERE.
MR. RAMSEY?
HEADACHE... TOLD THE TEACHER JUST NEEDED IBUPROFEN, BUT...
LIE DOWN. WHERE ARE YOUR...?
SAME THING THAT ALWAYS HAPPENS TO THEM. I MIGHT AS WELL GIVE UP ON THEM
ISN'T THIS WHY YOU NEED THEM?
DOESN'T STOP THE HEADACHES CAUSED BY OTHERS. WHAT'S THE POINT?

FINALLY, IT TOOK FOREVER FOR THAT HEADACHE TO DIE DOWN.
I BETTER GET BACK...
YOU KNOW, AS A MENTAL HEALTH EXPERT, YOU'D THINK YOU'D KNOW JUST HOW CREEPY THAT IS.
WELL, AT LEAST YOU'RE STILL AS SNARKY AS USUAL.

IT WAS JUST A HEADACHE FROM NOT HAVING MY GLASSES. I'LL JUST HAVE TO...
WITH ALL THAT'S HAPPENED TODAY, YOU THINK I BELIEVE STRESS DIDN'T PLAY A PART?
NO ONE GOT HURT, AND THE IDIOT GOT SHUT DOWN BEFORE HE COULD START. WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?
NOT JUST THE SHOOTING. I'VE HEARD ABOUT THE RUMORS GOING AROUND.
THERE ARE OTHERS MY AGE THAT DON'T LIVE WITH THEIR FAMILIES ANYMORE. THEY HAVE TO WORK AND GO TO SCHOOL, TOO.
BUT IT BOTHERS YOU TO KNOW THAT SO MANY PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL LIFE, DOESN'T IT?
YOU KNOW WHAT COULD RESULT FROM THAT.
YOU'VE NEVER SEEN WHAT MY BOSS DOES TO THOSE THAT HARRASS HERWORKERS, HAVE YOU?
I'VE HEARD RUMORS, BUT DON'T TAKE MUCH STOCK IN THEM.

DAVID, I CAN DO THIS ALL DAY, YOU KNOW.
YOU MEAN THERE AREN'T A LOT OF PEOPLE SCARED OVER THE SHOOTING?
ARE YOU KIDDING? IT'S BECOME THE JOKE OF THE DAY.
WELL, THAT'S DISTURBING. NOT A SINGLE ONE WAS CONCERNED?
EVEN YOU DON'T SEEM BOTHERED.
AT LEAST, I'M NOT CRACKING JOKES ABOUT THE GUY.
I'M NOT SURE IF THAT'S ANY BETTER.

IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER, I WAS CONCERNED AT FIRST.
THE THOUGHT OF SOMEONE EVEN GETTING THAT CLOSE TO THE SCHOOL WITH A GUN SCARED ME.
I KNEW THE WEIGHT OF THE SITUATION.
IT TOOK ME A COUPLE HOURS TO CALM DOWN, THINKING OVER EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED.
HONESTLY, WE BOTH KNOW THAT THE MEDIA RESPONSE IS GONNA BE FAR WORSE THAN WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED.

FINALLY, SAFE.
NOW JUST TO GET READY FOR...
DAVID, ARE YOU OKAY?!
I'M FINE. WHY WOULDN'T I...?
I HEARD ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED AT YOUR SCHOOL.
OH... YEAH. THAT.
WELL, THAT RESPONSE WAS UNDERWHELMING AS STRESSED OUT AS YOU ARE.

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE FINE?
THE SHOOTER DIDN'T GET ANYWHERE NEAR ME OR ANYONE BESIDES SECURITY.
I'M STILL GIVING YOU THE DAY OFF. GO HOME.
NO, I CAN STILL WORK.
I'M NOT 'LETTING' YOU. I'M TELLING YOU. I'M NOT HURTING FOR WORKERS TONIGHT.
EVEN THEN, I'M BETTER OFF HERE.
FINE. YOU CAN STAY, BUT YOU'RE STILL NOT WORKING TONIGHT.
DON'T SEE WHY YOU WOULD WANT TO SPEND YOUR DAY OFF AT WORK.

OKAY, WHAT'S WRONG, DAVID?
NOTHING YOU SHOULD HAVE TO GET INVOLVED IN.
WELL, YOU LOOK LIKE YOU NEED HELP, SO I WILL.
DON'T THINK THAT'S ... UHHH...
IS YOUR BOSS HERE?
THAT WOULD BE ME.
WE HAVE A COMPLAINT ABOUT ONE OF YOUR EMPLOYEES.
NO ONE HERE FITS THAT DESCRIPTION.
HIS NAME IS DAVID. SHOULDN'T BE HARD TO MISS, HIS APPEARANCE SCREAMS 'LOSER'.
I THINK I FIGURED IT OUT.
I REALLY DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD BE WORRIED OR NOT.

DON'T LIE. WE KNOW HE'S HERE. STOP PROTECTING HIM.
I DIDN'T LIE. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
WHAT ELSE? WE WANT HIM GONE.
I'M SORRY, BUT IT'S NOT YOUR DECISION WHO I HIRE AND FIRE.
SO UNLESS YOU HAVE A LEGITIMATE REASON FOR ME TO GET RID OF HIM, WHICH I KNOW YOU DON'T, HE STAYS.
I'M TELLING YOU, YOU'RE MAKING A MISTAKE.
I'LL LIVE WITH IT. NOW, GET OUT.
WE WILL, WITH A LOT MORE THAN YOU THINK.
THINGS HAVE GOTTEN MORE 'INTERESTING' SINCE YOU GOT HERE.
I'D LIKE THINGS TO GET MORE 'BORING' IF YOU ASK ME.

WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?
REMEMBER THE GUY THAT STALKED ME IN HERE YESTERDAY?
I'D LIKE TO FORGET HIM...
WELL, HE GOT THE RUMOR MILL GOING AT SCHOOL ABOUT MY PERSONAL LIFE.
SO TYPICAL HIGH SCHOOL.
SO WHAT DO YOU DO TO AN 'UNDESIRABLE' IN HIGH SCHOOL?
YOU USE EVERY PERSONAL DETAIL ON THEM TO TORMENT THEM.
SHOULD I ASK?
I'M NOT THAT FAR REMOVED FROM HIGH SCHOOL.
VALERIE, I WILL NOT BE SURPRISED IN THE SLIGHTEST IF YOU GET RID OF ME.
YOU DON'T NEED WHAT BAGGAGE IS ABOUT TO COME DOWN ON ME.
LIKE I'M SCARED OF A FEW BRATS. YOU'RE A KEEPER.

SO WHAT ALL DO THEY KNOW?
THIS JOB, ABOUT STACY, AND ABOUT KYLE... OR AT LEAST THAT I'M FRIENDS WITH A ROOMMATE.
I DON'T KNOW IF THEY KNOW WHERE I LIVE, BUT IT'S NOT THAT HARD TO FIGURE OUT.
SO THAT'S WHY YOU WERE SO INTENT ON WORKING TONIGHT.
IT WAS THE ONLY PLACE I FELT 'SAFE'... RELATIVELY ANYWAY.
IT'S ALSO WHY I WANT TO GRADUATE EARLY SO BADLY.
I JUST WANT TO GET OUT OF THERE AND MOVE ON.
TRUST ME, IF I COULD HAVE IF I WOULD'VE.
THE MORE THINGS LIKE THIS HAPPEN, THE MORE DROPPING OUT SEEMS MORE APPEALING.
DON'T YOU DARE!!

IF YOU DO DROP OUT, I WILL...
I KNOW. I'M NOT STUPID.
BUT IT WOULD BE A LIE IF I TOLD YOU IT WASN'T TEMPTING.
IT'S NOT WORTH WRECKING YOUR FUTURE OVER SOME JUVENILE BEHAVIOR.
I KNOW. BUT RIGHT NOW, IT'S HARD TO THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE WHEN I'M STILL TRYING TO STABLIZE THE PRESENT.
I STILL FEEL LIKE I'M SCREWING THAT UP.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT SCREWING UP. YOU'LL KNOW WHEN YOU HAVE.

I'VE GOT SOME WORK TO DO. GET HOME, DAVID.
ENJOY YOUR DAY OFF.
UMMM...YES, MA'AM.
ARE YOU OKAY?
JUST STILL WORRIED.
I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
OUT HERE, HARDLY ANYONE CARES.
13

I GUESS YOUR RIGHT. NOTHING'S HAPPENED SO...
... FAR?
VICTOR?
WHAT... THE... HELL?!
THAT'S MY QUESTION.

FRIEND OF YOURS?
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
URRRRGGG...
WHAT ARE YOU FOLLOWING US FOR?
MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS.
YOU HAVE YOUR NOSE UP OURS.
PLEASE, THAT'S EVERYONE'S BUSINESS THANKS TO THAT IDIOT MANUEL.
I SERIOUSLY DON'T UNDERSTAND EVERYONE'S FIXATION ON ME.
HAVEN'T FIGURED IT OUT YET, SMART GUY?

BUT RIGHT NOW. I OWE THAT BITCH PAYBACK.
DAVID?!
13
PLEASE, MANUEL HITS HARDER THAN YOU DO.

LEAVE US ALONE, VICTOR.
MAKE ME.
FINE. DO YOU WANT TO SEE HOW LONG IT TAKES FOR ME TO CASTRATE YOU?
URK! FINE!
SERIOUSLY, YOU TOOK HIS PUNCH LIKE IT WAS NOTHING. WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?
MANUEL AND VICTOR ARE JUST IDIOTS. I CAN TAKE THE WORST HE CAN DISH.
THERE ARE OTHERS THAT WILL DO FAR WORSE THAN WHAT THEY CAN.
OH... RIGHT...

HOW LONG UNTIL KYLE GETS HOME?
ABOUT ANOTHER HOUR, WHY?
THEN, YOU BETTER COME TO MY PLACE SO WE CAN TAKE CARE OF THAT.
GAH! DIDN'T NOTICE THAT!
IS THAT REALLY SMART THOUGH?
WE WATCH OUT FOR EACH OTHER, DAVID.
BESIDES, YOU'RE THE ONE THAT NEEDS TO LEARN THINGS AREN'T HOPELESS.

IN FACT, WHY DON'T YOU STAY OVER TONIGHT?
ARE YOU SURE?
IF YOU WANT TO. BESIDES, WE CAN BOTH USE THE COMPANY TODAY.
SURE, I...
YOU'LL ONLY REGRET THIS. DON'T DRAG HER DOWN WITH YOU.
I MEAN I REALLY SHOUDN'T...
DAVID, ARE YOU OKAY?
WHY?
YOU JUST SMEARED BLOOD ALL OVER YOUR FACE.
HUH?!

THERE. THAT SHOULD HOLD.
THANKS.
SO, ARE YOU GOING TO STAY THE NIGHT?
I...WANT TO AND FEEL I SHOULDN'T AT THE SAME TIME.
NEED HELP MAKING THAT DECISION?
WHAT DO YOU...?
EARTH TO MORON!! YOU JUST FUCKED UP BIG TIME!!!

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SHOULD I GO AFTER HIM?
NO, I'LL JUST MAKE THINGS WORSE. THAT WAS STUPID.
HELLO? ... MOM, THIS IS NOT A GOOD TIME.
I CAN HONESTLY SAY, I DO NOT HAVE A BOYFRIEND OVER RIGHT NOW.
IT'S JUST A BAD TIME RIGHT NOW.

WHY ARE YOU AND DAD SO INTENT ON ME GETTING A HUSBAND?
I'M FINE RIGHT NOW WITHOUT ONE.
YES, I'M STILL WORKING AT THAT DINER. IT PAYS FINE.
I DON'T CARE. MOM, THIS IS EXACTLY WHY I GOT MY OWN APARTMENT AS SOON AS I COULD, TO GET AWAY FROM THIS.
GOOD BYE.
I SWEAR MOM'S JUST AS CHAUVINIST AS MY DAD.

IF YOU'RE ABOUT TO MOCK ME ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED WITH STACY, YOU MAY NOW LEAVE THE ROOM.
I'LL PRETEND YOU DIDN'T JUST USE THE DOWNFALL MEME ON ME.
NOT IN THE MOOD, ECD.

SERIOUSLY, I WAS HAPPY FOR YOU AND YOU FREAKED OUT!
I'M JUST MESSED UP. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
SHE WANTS YOU. IF YOU WANTED TO BANG, SHE WOULD LET YOU.
EVEN IF I WANTED TO, DOESN'T MEAN I SHOULD.
IF I PURSUE A RELATIONSHIP, IT'LL JUST FALL APART, GUARANTEED.
IF EVERYONE LIVED LIKE THAT. NO ONE WOULD SUCCEED AT ANYTHING.
I'M NOT EVERYONE, JUST A 'LOSER' MY GENERATION WANTS TO WEED OUT.
I'M SORRY, BUT IF YOU HADN'T REALIZED, I DON'T HANG OUT WITH LOSERS.

I GOT WORK TO DO, SO IF THAT'S ALL YOU'VE GOT TO SAY...
FINE, IF I CAN'T TALK SENSE INTO YOU, I KNOW WHO WILL.
DAVID?
WHAT NOW?
THINK YOU CAN LOOK AT MY COMPUTER?
SOMETHING... WEIRD IS GOING ON.
OF COURSE...

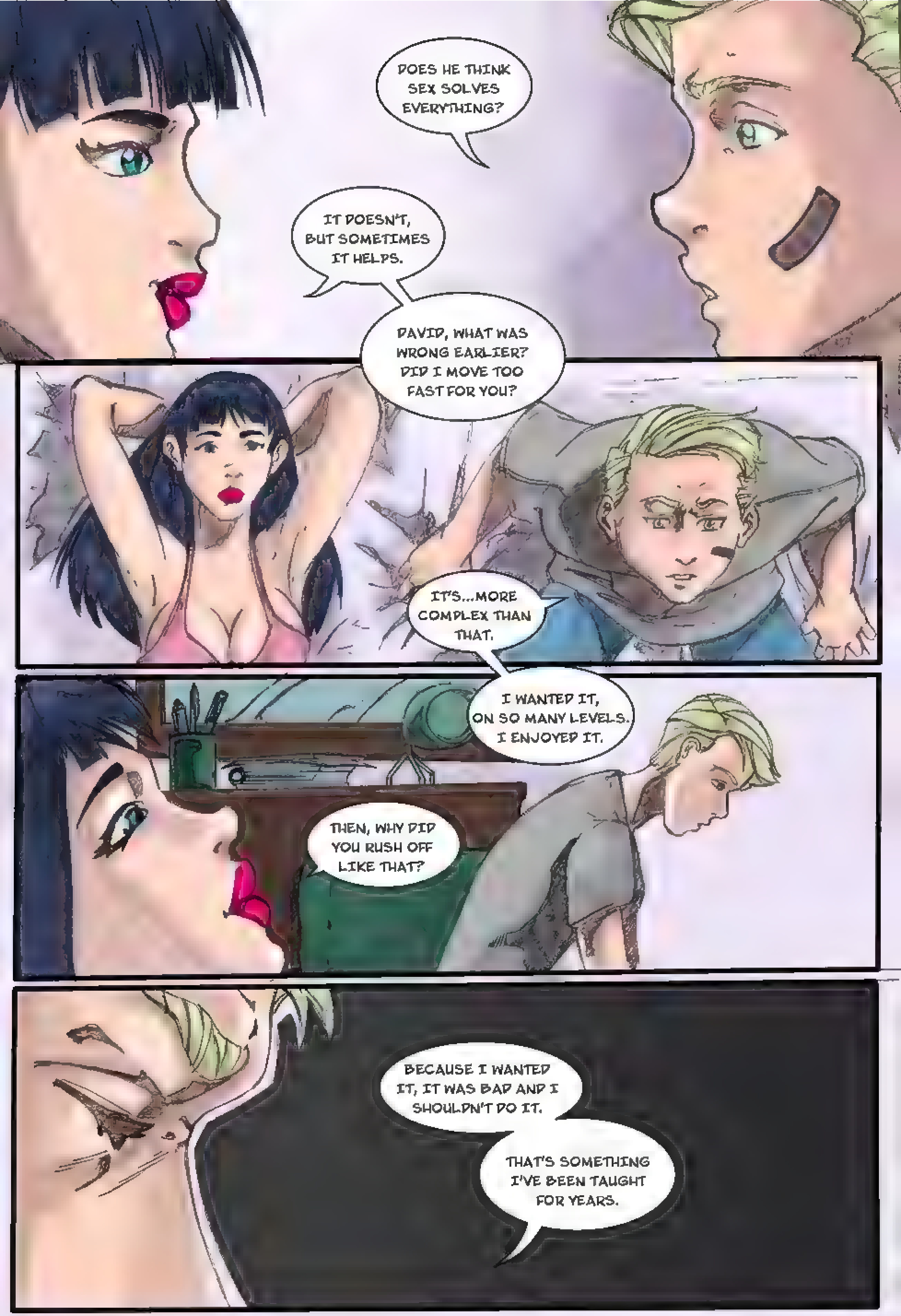
INTERESTING TASTE IN PORN, KYLE.
HA...HA...
OKAY, ECD. YOU CAN STOP HARRASSING KYLE, NOW.
MAKE ME!!
TWO GIRLS... ONE CUP.
SHOULD MY COMPUTER SHUDDER LIKE THAT?
ONLY WHEN POSSESSED BY AN OMNIPRESENT ENTITY BENT ON CONTROLLING THE DIGTIAL WORLD.

THAT WAS OFFICIALLY THE WEIRDEST THING I'VE EVER SEEN IN MY LIFE.
YOU'LL GET USED TO IT.
SO, WHAT WAS THE BIG DEAL WITH THAT?
LONG STORY.
WELL, I ADMIT I WAS LOOKING UP PORN, BUT SOME OF THAT STUFF...
NONE OF IT WAS ILLEGAL, WAS IT?
NOPE, JUST LEARNED A FEW THINGS ABOUT MYSELF I DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW.

STRANGEST THING, HE TOLD ME TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT YOU AND STACY?
HERE WE GO...
I GOT PUNCHED IN THE FACE WHILE ON MY WAY HOME.
STACY WAS THERE, AND SINCE YOU WERE GONNA BE GONE FOR A WHILE, SHE TOOK ME TO HER PLACE TO PATCH ME UP.
WELL, THAT EXPLAINS THE BANDAGE.
WHILE I WAS THERE SHE ASKED ME TO STAY OVER THE NIGHT, BUT I HESITATED TO RESPOND.
WELL, THAT'S AWESOME.
THEN, SHE KISSED ME.
WHOA! DAVID THAT'S AWE-
THEN, I FREAKED OUT AND LEFT.
OKAY, THAT'S NOT AWESOME.

DID YOU SAY ANYTHING TO HER?
JUST THAT I WAS MESSED UP.
DAVID, YOU SHOULD GO BACK THERE.
WHY? SO I CAN MAKE THINGS WORSE?
JUST TALK TO HER ABOUT WHAT WAS GOING THROUGH YOUR HEAD. SHE NEEDS TO KNOW.
IS THAT SMART?
SMARTER THAN WHAT YOU DID.
IS DAVID HOME?
ONE, SEC... DAVID, NEVER MIND. SHE'S HERE.

STACY? WHAT ARE YOU...?
WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
YOU LEFT SO SUDDENLY, I FIGURED I'D GIVE YOU TIME TO SORT THINGS OUT.
WELL, I'M GONNA ORDER PIZZA FOR EVERYONE, SO YOU TWO HIDE IN DAVID'S ROOM FOR AWHILE.
KYLE, WE DON'T NEED TO....
WAS I GIVING YOU A CHOICE?
YOU TWO TALK, MAKE OUT, BANG, WHATEVER.
HEH, WHOOPS. FORGOT TO ASK FOR TOPPINGS. OH, WELL.


DOES HE THINK SEX SOLVES EVERYTHING?
IT DOESN'T, BUT SOMETIMES IT HELPS.
DAVID, WHAT WAS WRONG EARLIER? DID I MOVE TOO FAST FOR YOU?
IT'S...MORE COMPLEX THAN THAT.
I WANTED IT, ON SO MANY LEVELS. I ENJOYED IT.
THEN, WHY DID YOU RUSH OFF LIKE THAT?
BECAUSE I WANTED IT, IT WAS BAD AND I SHOULDN'T DO IT.
THAT'S SOMETHING I'VE BEEN TAUGHT FOR YEARS.

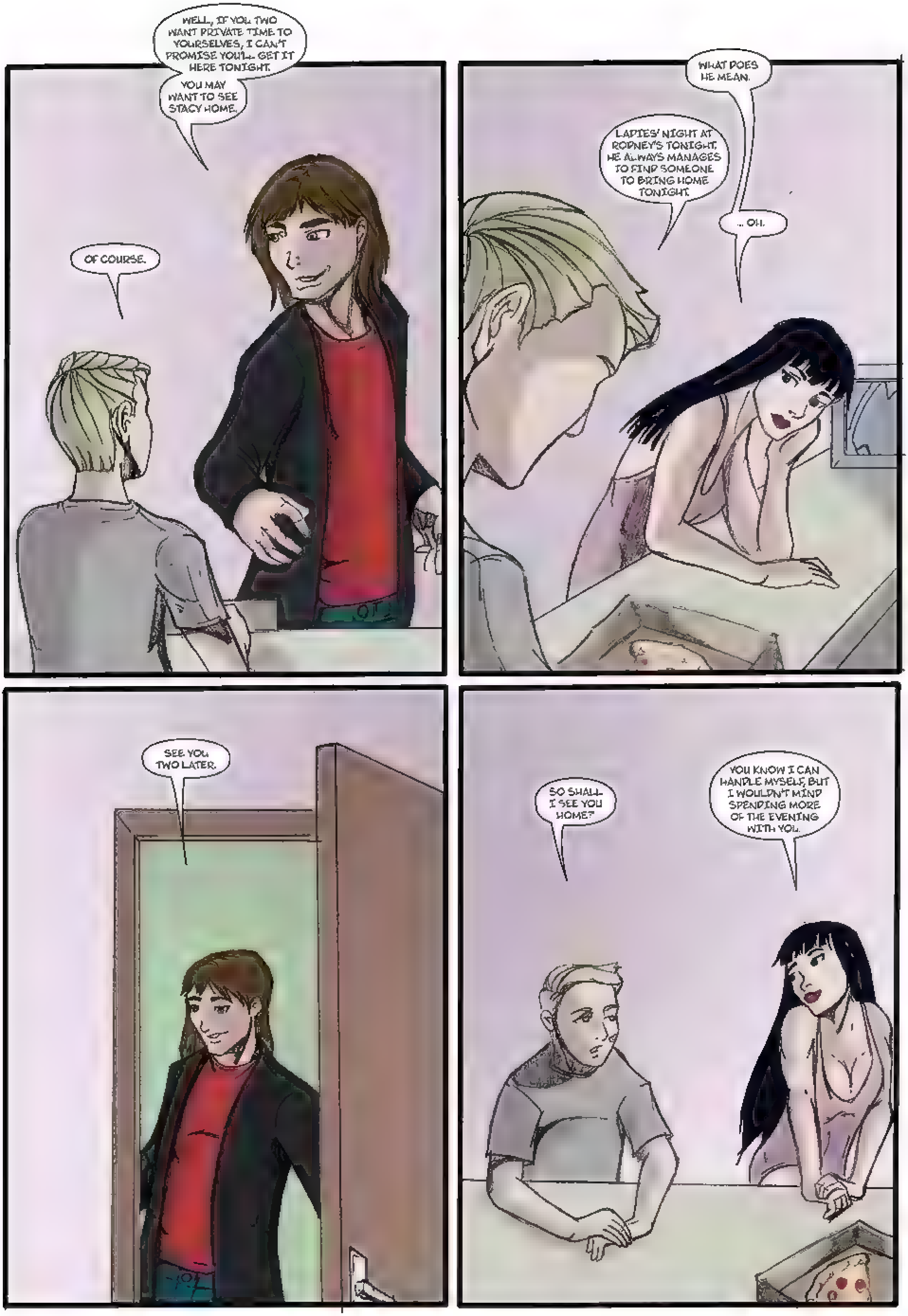
WELL, THAT'S A CRAPPY LIFE LESSON.
CRAPPY OR NOT, I'VE BEEN TAUGHT HOW I SHOULD LIVE AND TO NOT DEVIATE FROM IT.
IT'S OKAY TO CHASE AFTER WHAT YOU WANT. THERE'S NO REASON TO BE AFRAID TO.
I KNOW. KYLE'S BEEN TEACHING ME THAT. BUT OLD HABITS DIE HARD.
LOOKS LIKE YOU NEED SOMEONE ELSE TO TEACH YOU.
HOW DO YOU...?

FEELING BETTER?
MUCH.
I DON'T WANT YOU TO FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE, BUT I WANT TO HELP PUSH YOUR COMFORT ZONE.
I THOUGHT WE WEREN'T GOING ROMANTIC?
YOU CAN EXPRESS YOURSELF WITHOUT IT BEING ROMANTIC, EVEN SEXUALLY.
I NEVER THOUGHT IT MUCH LIKE THAT.
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU'VE GROWN UP WITH HIGH EXPECTATIONS.
I WANT TO MAKE THIS WORK BETWEEN US, BUT TO DO THAT, WE BOTH NEED TO OPEN UP MORE.

YOU? WHAT'S WRONG?
NOTHING BAD. MY PARENTS HAVE MUCH LOWER EXPECTATIONS OF ME...
I GUESS IT'S MY FAULT. I HAVEN'T GIVEN THEM REASON TO BELIEVE I CAN DO MORE THAN BE A HOUSE WIFE.
A HOUSE WIFE?
I'VE NEVER BEEN DRIVEN, NEVER HAD ANYTHING TO LOOK TO.
SO, THEY THINK I'LL JUST BE GOOD FOR PROVIDING GRANDKIDS.
THEY'D BE MORE DISAPPOINTED IF I DID MORE THAN THAT.

I DON'T THINK IT'S A BAD IDEA TO BE MARRIED WITH KIDS, BUT I'D RATHER DO IT ON MY TERMS.
I WANT TO SLOW DOWN.
IT ACTUALLY HELPS KNOWING YOU DON'T WANT CHILDREN. AT LEAST NOT YET.
REALLY?
IT DOES. I'VE 'JUMPED IN' TOO FAST BEFORE AND I DIDN'T LIKE IT EITHER. SO EVEN THIS I CAN ENJOY.
FOR NOW?
UNTIL YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH DOING MORE.
AS MUCH AS I'D LIKE TO WATCH YOU TWO MAKE OUT, PIZZA'S HERE.

HOW LONG WERE YOU WATCHING?
OFF AND ON. AND DON'T WORRY, NO CAMERA THIS TIME.
BETTER NOT BE...
ARE YOU OKAY NOW, DAVID?
YEAH. GUESS I JUST NEEDED TO SHUT MY BRAIN UP FOR ONCE.
I'M SORRY FOR RUNNING LIKE I DID.
THAT'S FINE, THE OFFER FOR STAYING OVER IS STILL OPEN THOUGH.
WOW, DAVID. YOU'RE REALLY MOVING ON UP IF GIRLS ARE ASKING YOU TO SLEEP WITH THEM.



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YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAY THE NIGHT TONIGHT, BUT CAN YOU STAY AT MY PLACE FOR AWHILE?
UH... SURE.
WHY?
I JUST WANT TO TALK.
THOUGH, I WOULDN'T MIND MAKING OUT A LITTLE MORE.
IF YOU WANT IT, I WON'T TURN IT DOWN.

IS SOMETHING WRONG, BRO?
JUST THINKING, CARLOS.
YOU'VE BEEN DOING THAT A LOT TODAY.
JUST SOMETHING THAT'S BOTHERING ME.
BY THE WAY, DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH A PAIR OF GLASSES COST?
ARE YOU SERIOUS? ARE YOU FINALLY ADMITTING YOUR BLIND?
WANT TO FIND OUT?
NOT HELPING YOUR CASE, BRO.

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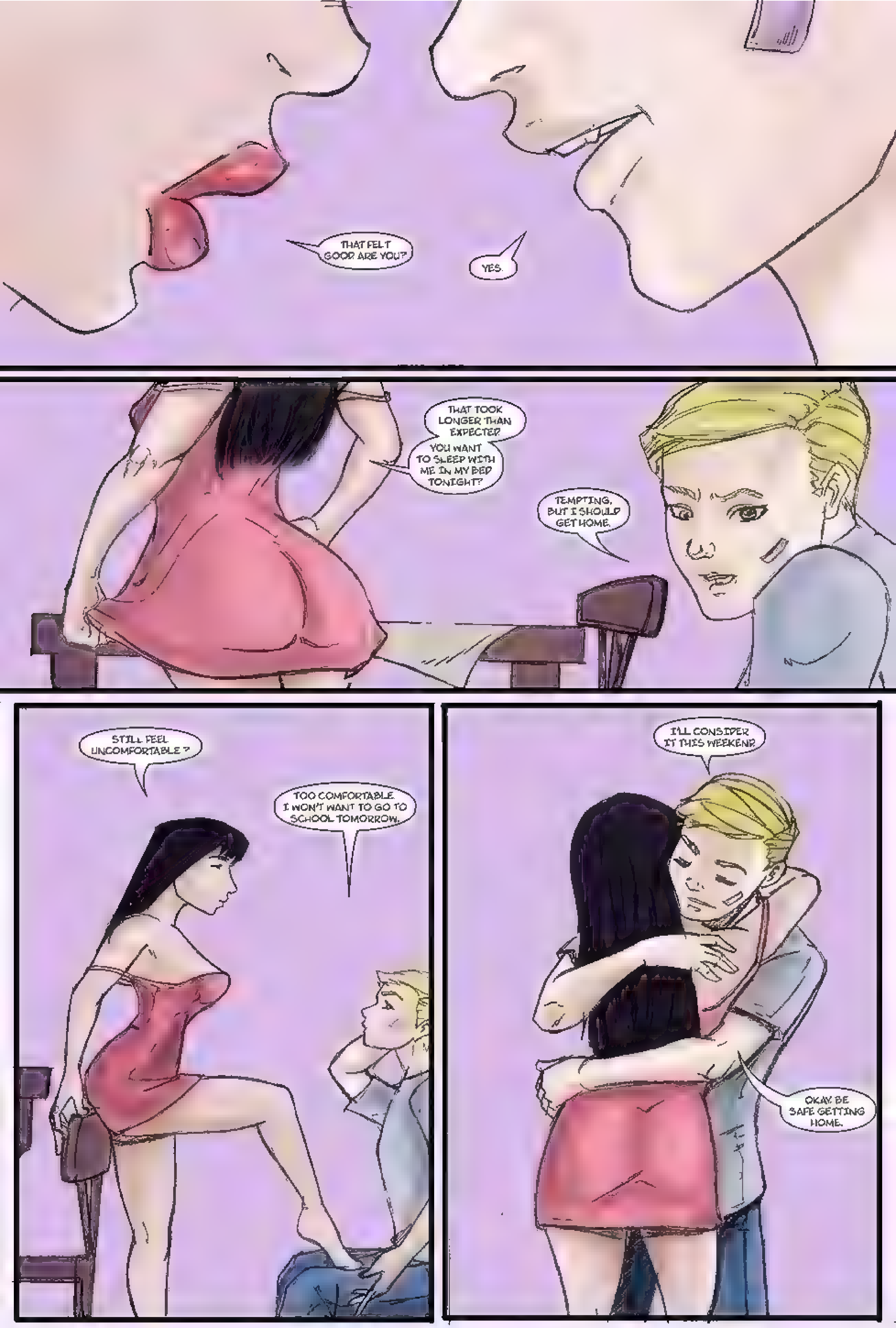
IS IT ACTUALLY THAT HARD TO LIVE ON YOUR OWN?
NOWADAYS, ESPECIALLY.
YOU REALLY NEED TO HAVE YOUR PRIORITIES STRAIGHT OR YOU COULD GO HUNGRY OR HOMELESS.
AND DON'T GET ME STARTED ABOUT GETTING WORK. I'M LUCKY TO HAVE THE JOB I DO.
SO FOR SOMEONE MY AGE TO DO THAT...
THEY'D EITHER BE STUPID LUCKY, OR DESPERATE
I WOULD HATE TO SEE THE FAMILY LIFE OF THOSE GUYS, IF THEY HAVE ONE
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT I'D GIVE TO HAVE EVEN HALF OF WHAT YOU'RE COMPLAINING ABOUT!!
YEAH...

STACY'S APARTMENT
WAS... SOMETHING WRONG?
ALWAYS ASSUMING THE WORST.
I JUST WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW I FEEL COMPLETELY COMFORTABLE WITH YOU.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
MEANING THAT WHENEVER YOU'RE COMFORTABLE WITH IT, I'M WILLING TO GO ALL THE WAY WITH YOU.
I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO PUT OUT FOR MY SAKE.
MAYBE NOT, BUT I DO NOTICE YOU'RE SEXUALLY ATTRACTED TO ME.
GAH... SORRY.
DON'T BE. I'M GLAD.

SO THAT'S WHY YOU WERE GRINDING AGAINST ME EARLIER?
YES, I WANT YOU TO FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH IT FIRST.
BUT IF YOU EVER WANT TO DO SOMETHING SEXUAL, DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK.
I'LL CONSIDER IT.
UNTIL THEN, DON'T BE AFRAID TO FEEL ME UP NOW.


THAT FELT GOOD ARE YOU?
YES.
THAT TOOK LONGER THAN EXPECTED
YOU WANT TO SLEEP WITH ME IN MY BED TONIGHT?
TEMPTING, BUT I SHOULD GET HOME.
STILL FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE ?
TOO COMFORTABLE. I WON'T WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL TOMORROW.
I'LL CONSIDER IT THIS WEEKEND
OKAY. BE SAFE GETTING HOME.

MMMM... AAAAHHHHH...
OF COURSE.
OOOOH, YEAAAAH!
...HHHHUUUN
YES! YES! YES!
BETWEEN STACY AND THAT, I PROBABLY WON'T GET SLEEP EVEN AFTER THEY STOP.

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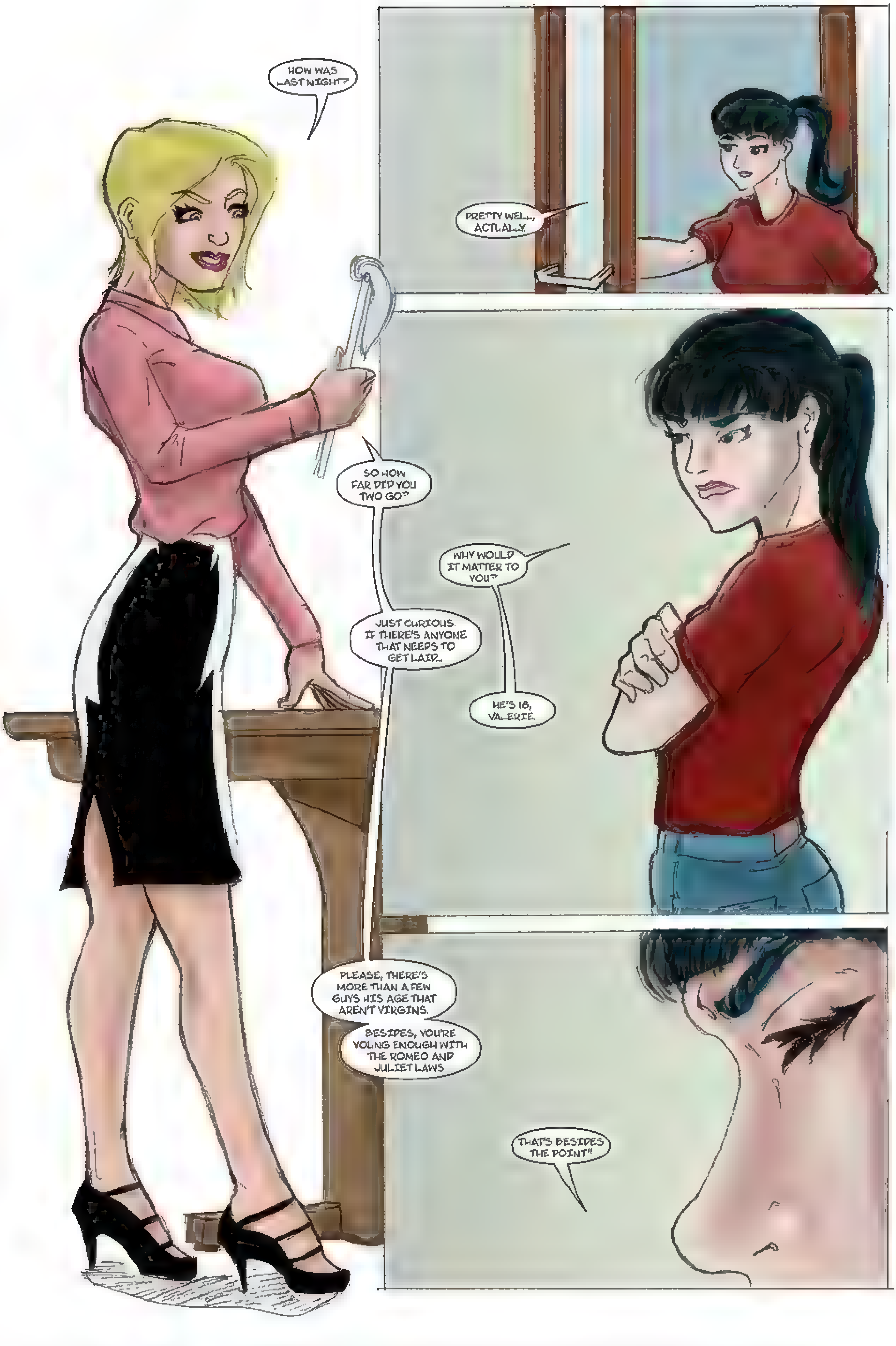
THERE HE IS..
HE'LL PAY FOR...
WHAT THE HELL?!
GAH! SORRY, VIC..
MANUEL, YOU FUCKING IDIOT!
WELL, THAT'S NOT NICE.

YOU DID THAT ON PURPOSE!
NO CLUE WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT...
DON'T PLAY WITH ME. WERE YOU TRYING TO PROTECT HIM?!
IF I WAS, WOULD IT MATTER?
DON'T FORGET I NORMALLY PROTECT YOU, BUT IF YOU CONTINUE TO GO AFTER HIM...
I MIGHT ACCIDENTLY LET A VINDICTIVE DEFENSIVE PLAYER THROUGH TO YOU.
YOU WOULDN'T...


HOW WAS LAST NIGHT?
PRETTY WELL... ACTUALLY.
SO HOW FAR DID YOU TWO GO?
WHY WOULD IT MATTER TO YOU?
JUST CURIOUS. IF THERE'S ANYONE THAT NEEDS TO GET LAID...
HE'S 18, VALERIE.
PLEASE, THERE'S MORE THAN A FEW GUYS HIS AGE THAT AREN'T VIRGINS.
BESIDES, YOU'RE YOUNG ENOUGH WITH THE ROMEO AND JULIET LAWS.
THAT'S BESIDES THE POINT!!

I'M BARELY IN THE DOOR AND YOU'RE ALREADY ASKING ABOUT MY SEX LIFE.
YOU KNOW I WOULDN'T ASK IF I DIDN'T CARE.
FINE, IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT THAT, HOW ABOUT YOUR SKETCHES?
CAN I JUST GET MY OPENING CHORES DONE FIRST?
I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO DRAW ME SOMETHING NOW.
I'M NOT SURE IF I SHOULD SHOW YOU, BUT IT'S EASIER THAN TALKING ABOUT IT.
I'LL GIVE IT BACK. YOU'LL NEED IT FOR THE SLOW PERIOD ANYWAY.
I THINK YOU'RE THE ONLY BOSS THAT LET'S HER WORKERS GOOF OFF.
HEY, IT KEEPS YOU FROM BEING BORED WHEN WE'RE SLOW. BESIDES, IF GET TO WORK ON MY...
NEVER MIND

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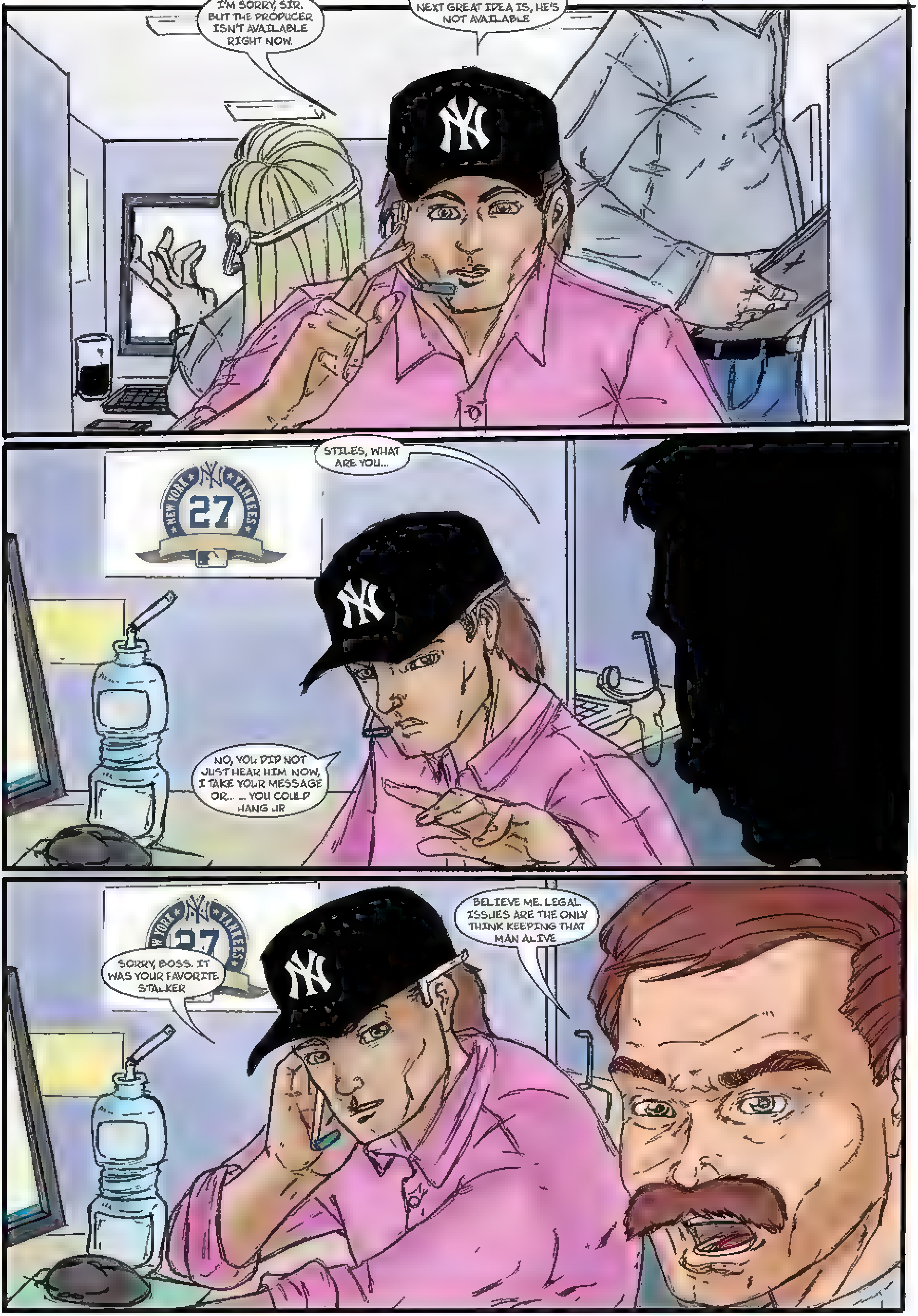
YOU SHOULD FINISH THESE AND SELL THEM. THEY'D BE GREAT AS PRINTS.
THEY WOULDN'T SELL.
ACTUALLY, THEY WOULD ESPECIALLY THAT LAST ONE.
I'M NOT SURE IF DAVID WOULD LIKE THAT.
DOES HE KNOW YOU'RE DRAWING FROM HIS STORIES?
NO, I DON'T--
THEN, HE DOESN'T HAVE TO KNOW.
I THINK HE WOULD RECOGNIZE A SCENE FROM HIS OWN STORY.
PLEASE, NAME ANYTHING ORIGINAL AND THERE'S HUNDREDS OF SOURCES IT COULD'VE RIPPED OFF.

CALM DOWN, HERE ARE YOUR RESULTS FROM THE STATE EXAM.
SO FAR SO GOOD TODAY. NO ONE'S HARRASSED ME... ODR
BET YOU OUTSCORED EVERYONE HERE, DAVID.
YEAH, YEAH...
SON OF A BITCH!!

THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR THAT, DAVID.
HOW THE HELL DID I FAIL?
DAVID.
I ACED EVERY OBJECTIVE. WHAT HAPPENED?
DAVID, WHAT'S WRONG?
I FAILED THE ESSAY.

I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT IT, DAVID.
WHY SHOULDN'T I? I CAN'T GRADUATE AT ALL IF I CAN'T PASS THIS.
LET ALONE GRADUATE EARLY.
IT'S WHY I HATE THESE EXAMS, TOO.
IT'S RIGGED TO WHERE YOU COULD STILL FAIL EVEN IF YOU GET 99% RIGHT.
THE ESSAY IS WORSE, TOO. A LOT OF ADVANCED STUDENTS GET TRIPPED UP ON IT BECAUSE THEY TRY TO DO TOO MUCH.
KNOWING YOU, YOU ONLY FAILED BECAUSE YOU WROTE ABOVE THE READING LEVEL OF THE REDNECK THAT GRADED YOUR TEST.


I'M SORRY, SIR. BUT THE PRODUCER ISN'T AVAILABLE RIGHT NOW.
SIR, I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU THINK YOUR NEXT GREAT IDEA IS, HE'S NOT AVAILABLE
NEW YORK YANKEES 27
STILES, WHAT ARE YOU...
NO, YOU DID NOT JUST HEAR HIM NOW, I TAKE YOUR MESSAGE OR... ... YOU COULD HANG UP
SORRY, BOSS. IT WAS YOUR FAVORITE STALKER
BELIEVE ME. LEGAL ISSUES ARE THE ONLY THINK KEEPING THAT MAN ALIVE

DID YOU HAVE ANY PLANS FOR TONIGHT?
JUST DINNER OUT WITH MY ROOMMATE.
WE'RE TAKING SOME OF THE OFFICE OUT TO THE PUB TONIGHT.
WHY DON'T YOU INVITE HIM?
I HAVE MENTIONED MY ROOMMATE HAPPENS TO BE UNDERAGED BEFORE, RIGHT?
NO PROBLEM. HE'LL PROBABLY ENJOY IT.
THAT'S DEBATABLE, BUT I'LL LET HIM KNOW.
I MEAN, COME ON. HOW OFTEN DOES A COLLEGE STUDENT GET TO MEET PEOPLE THAT WORK IN TV?
HIGH SCHOOL, ACTUALLY.
EVEN BETTER!
I DON'T SEE HOW.

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YES, YES. IT ALL SOUNDS. I'M SORRY, SOMETHING URGENT JUST CAME UP.
KYLE DID IT!
NOT WHAT MY STALKER JUST TOLD ME.
A LITTLE TOO PROUD OF YOURSELF, LEEROY?
THIS WASN'T THE FIRST TIME YOUR BROWN-NOSING GOT YOU IN TROUBLE.
BUT KYLE IS WORSE!
FAR FROM IT. I DON'T KNOW WHY I EVEN PUT UP WITH YOU ANYMORE.
BECAUSE OF MY FAMILY?
EVERYONE HERE HAS CONNECTIONS. THAT WON'T HELP YOU HERE.

SO I TAKE IT I'M NOT INVITED TO TONIGHT?
I WOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT MORE THAN THAT IF I WERE YOU.
WAIT, WHO ARE YOU CALLING?
SECURITY WILL SEE YOU OUT.
YOU WOULDN'T...
I JUST DID...

SORRY, BOSS. ANYTHING YOU NEED?
JUST SOMETHING LONG OVERDUE. GO AHEAD AND CALL THE POLICE DEPARTMENT.
I'VE PUT OFF PUTTING A RESTRAINING ORDER ON THAT MAN FOR TOO LONG.
YOU'VE BEEN BUSY. SOME RANDOM ANNOYANCE ISN'T EXACTLY THE FIRST THING ON YOUR MIND.
BUT I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT. YOUR NEXT SHOW IS IN 10.
TV IS WHERE THE DRAMA BELONGS.

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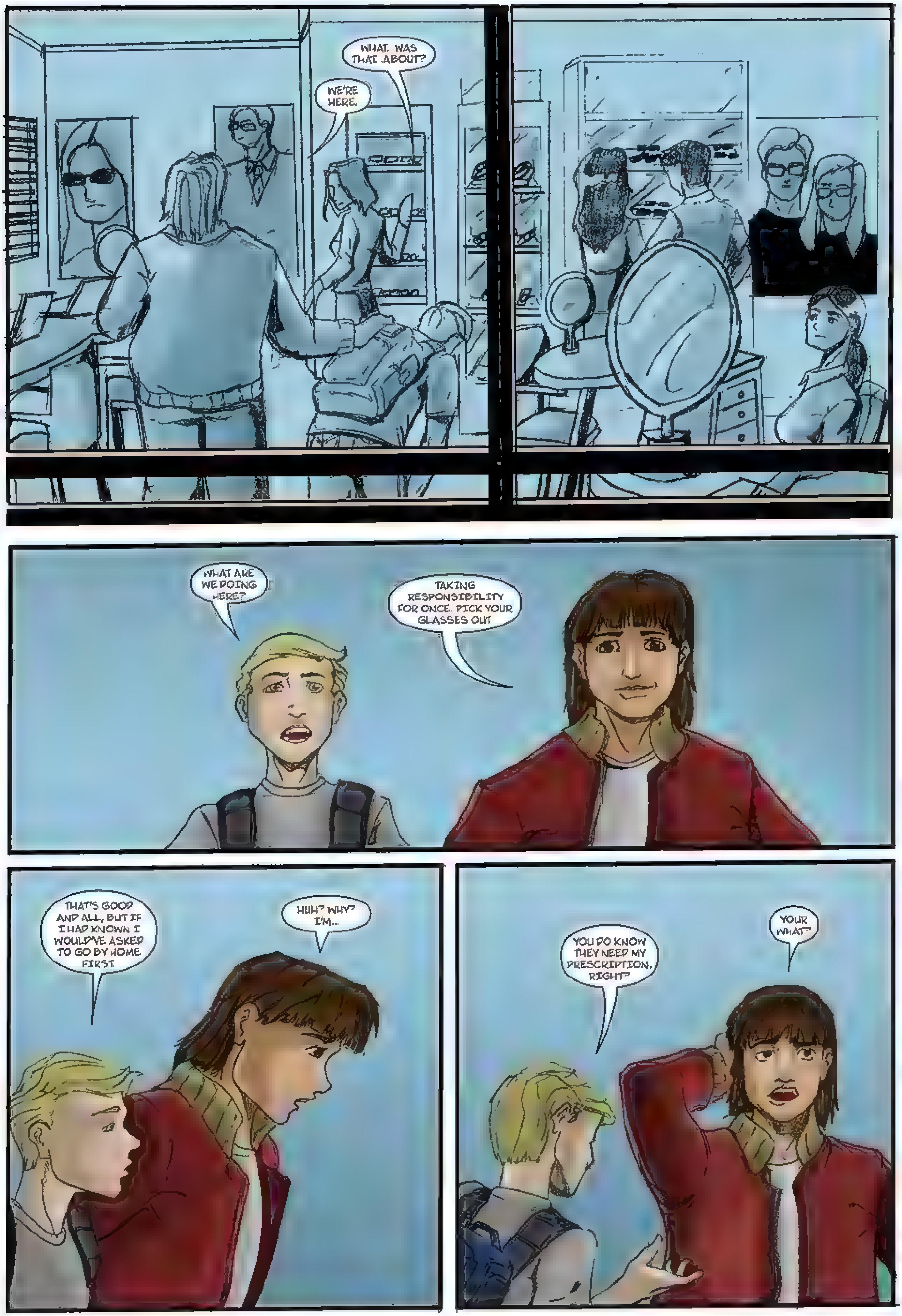

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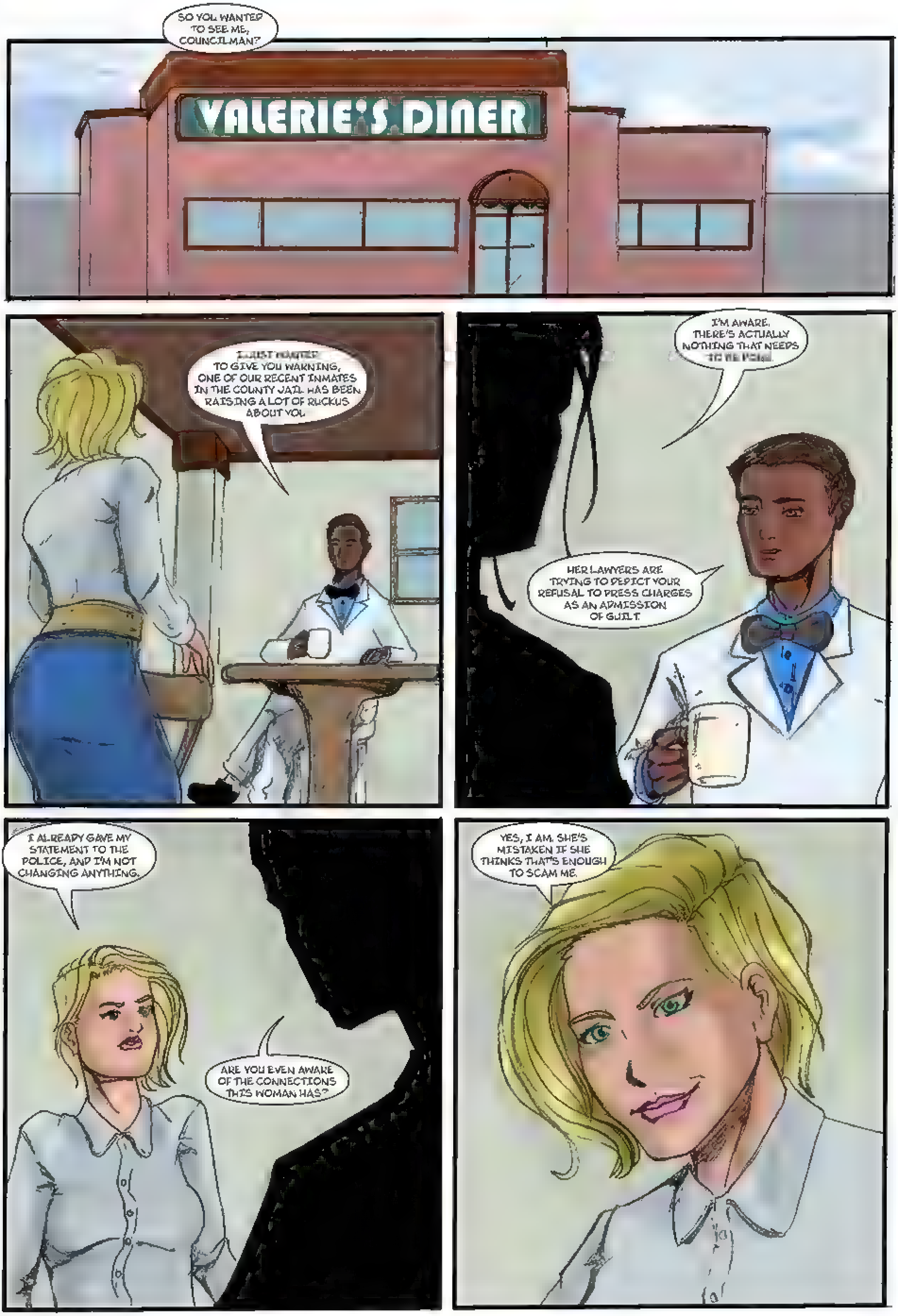
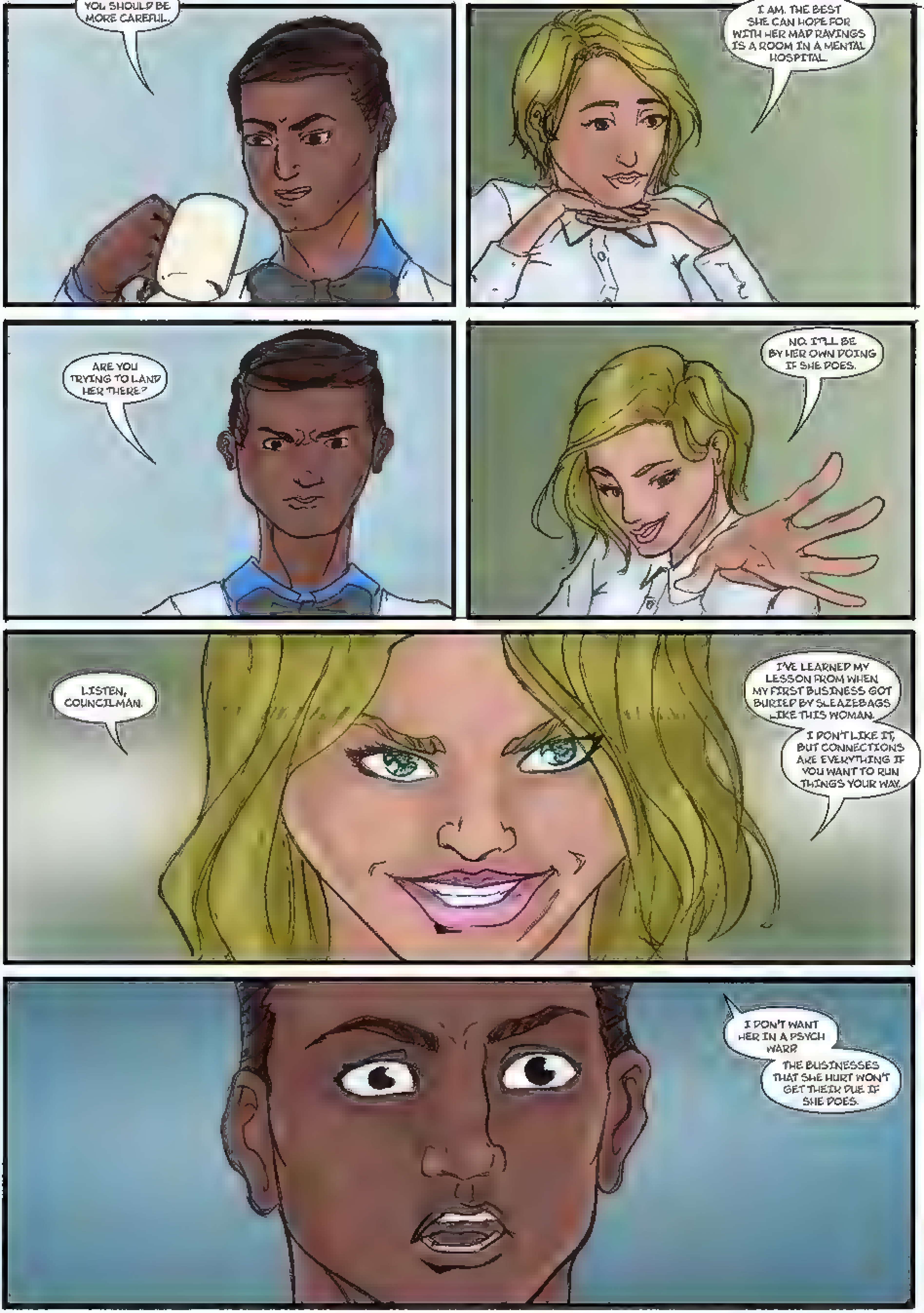
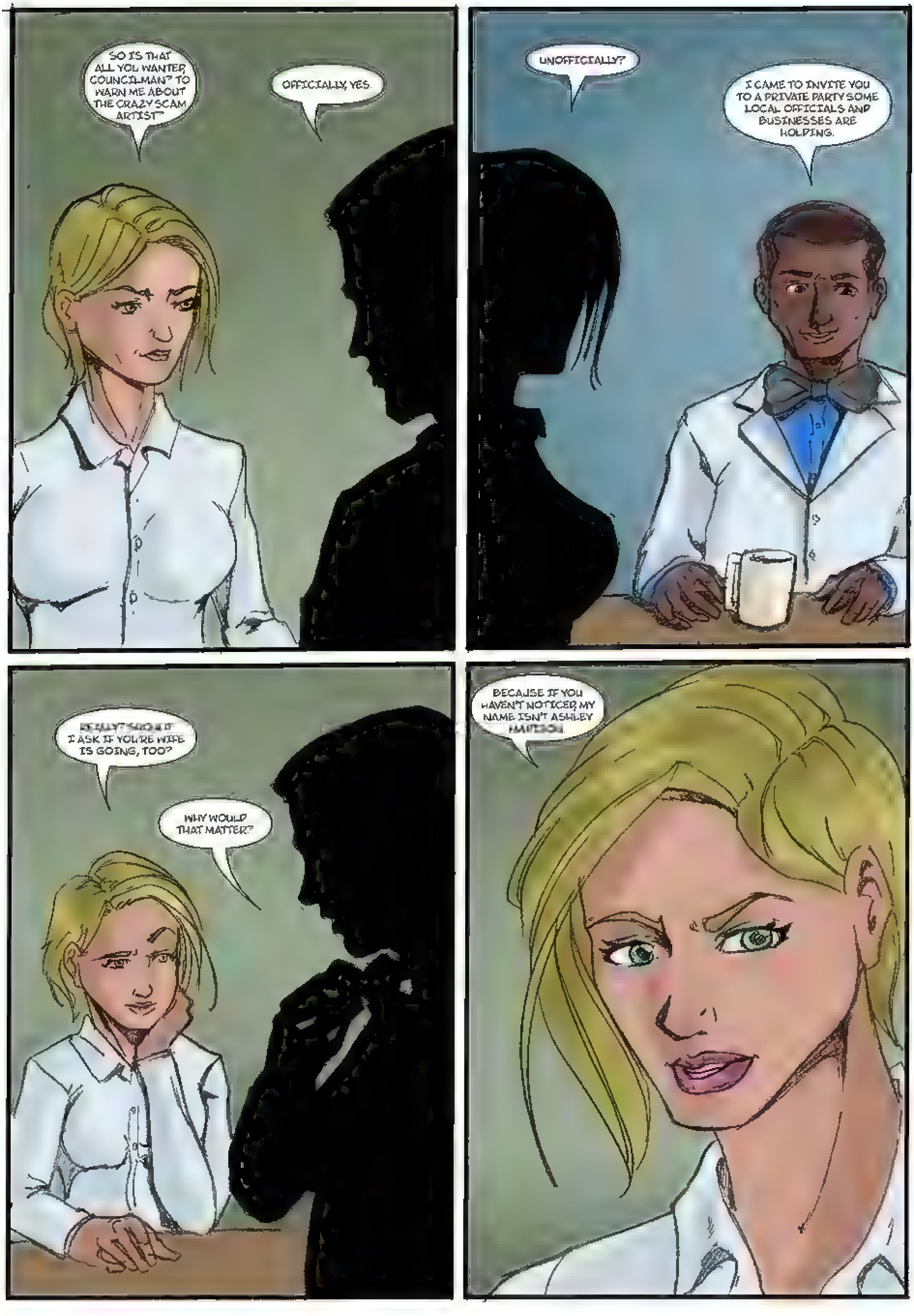

SO YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, COUNCILMAN?
VALERIE'S DINER
TO GIVE YOU WARNING, ONE OF OUR RECENT INMATES IN THE COUNTY JAIL HAS BEEN RAISING A LOT OF RUCKUS ABOUT YOU
I'M AWARE. THERE'S ACTUALLY NOTHING THAT NEEDS
HER LAWYERS ARE TRYING TO DEPICT YOUR REFUSAL TO PRESS CHARGES AS AN ADMISSION OF GUILT.
I ALREADY GAVE MY STATEMENT TO THE POLICE, AND I'M NOT CHANGING ANYTHING.
ARE YOU EVEN AWARE OF THE CONNECTIONS THIS WOMAN HAS?
YES, I AM. SHE'S MISTAKEN IF SHE THINKS THAT'S ENOUGH TO SCAM ME.


I JUST THINK YOU SHOULD BE MORE CAREFUL.
I AM. THE BEST SHE CAN HOPE FOR WITH HER MAD RAVINGS IS A ROOM IN A MENTAL HOSPITAL.
ARE YOU TRYING TO LAND HER THERE?
NO. IT'LL BE BY HER OWN DOING IF SHE DOES.
LISTEN, COUNCILMAN.
I'VE LEARNED MY LESSON FROM WHEN MY FIRST BUSINESS GOT BURIED BY SLEAZEBAGS LIKE THIS WOMAN.
I DON'T LIKE IT, BUT CONNECTIONS ARE EVERYTHING IF YOU WANT TO RUN THINGS YOUR WAY.
I DON'T WANT HER IN A PSYCH WARD.
THE BUSINESSES THAT SHE HURT WON'T GET THEIR DUE IF SHE DOES.



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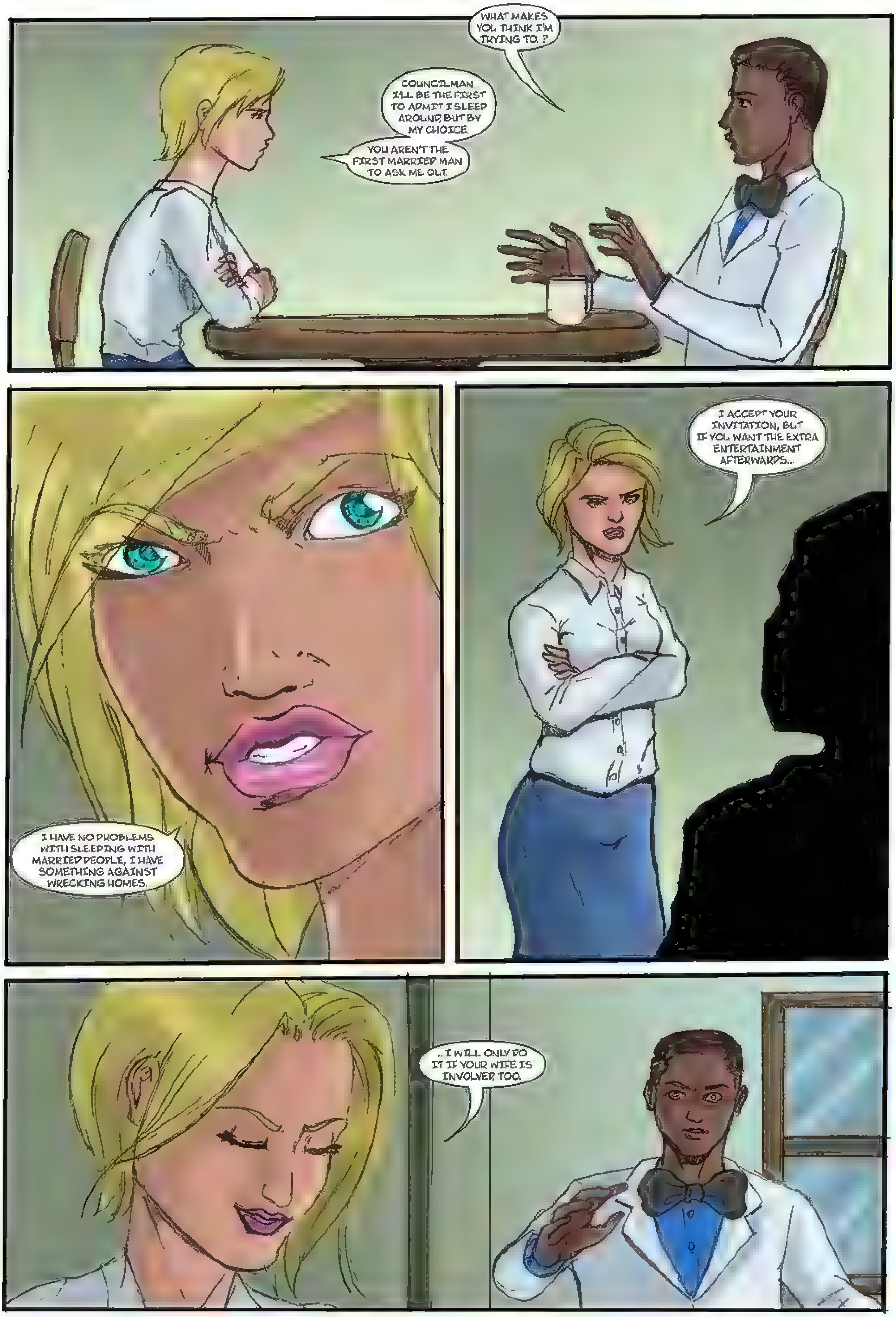

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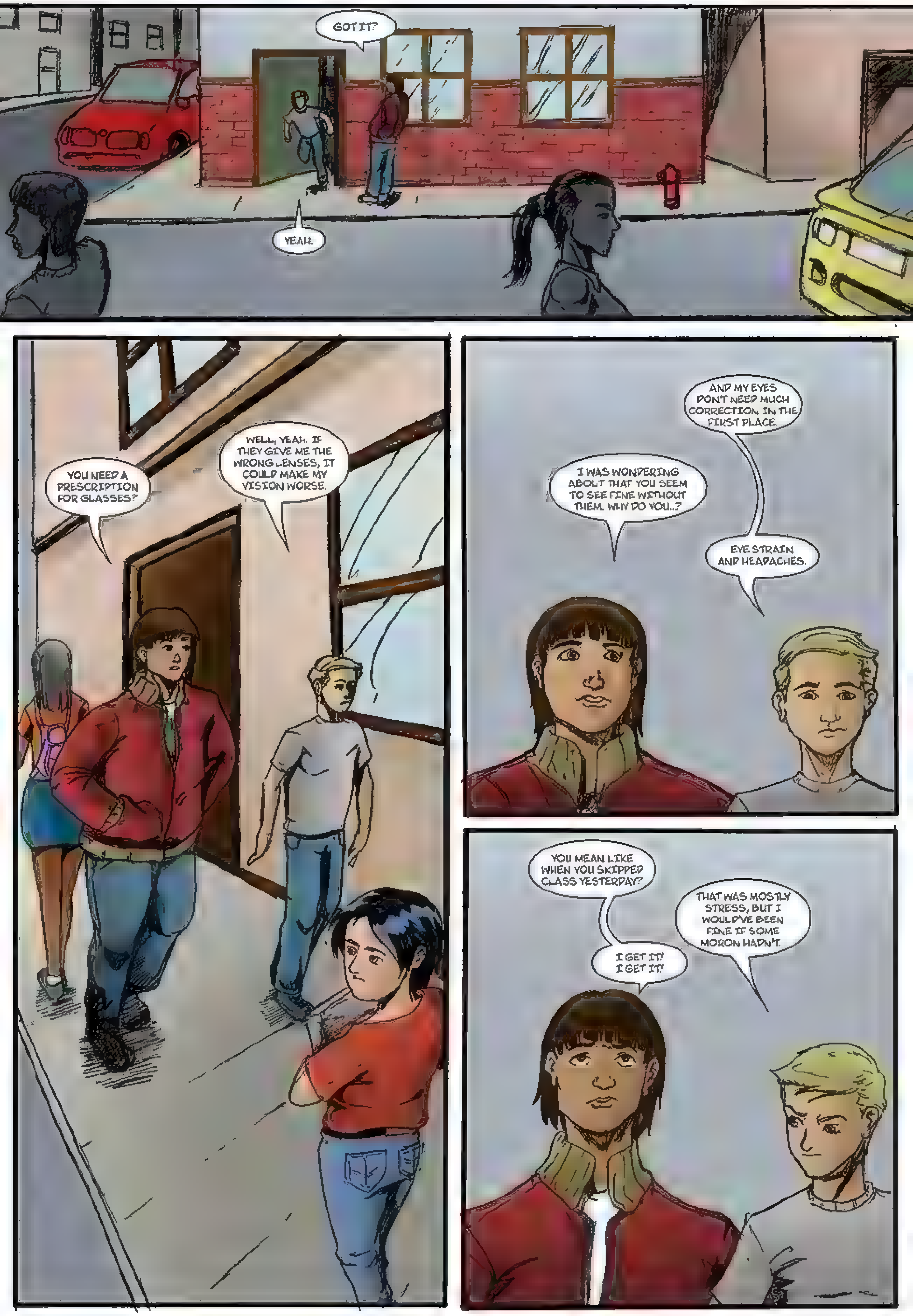

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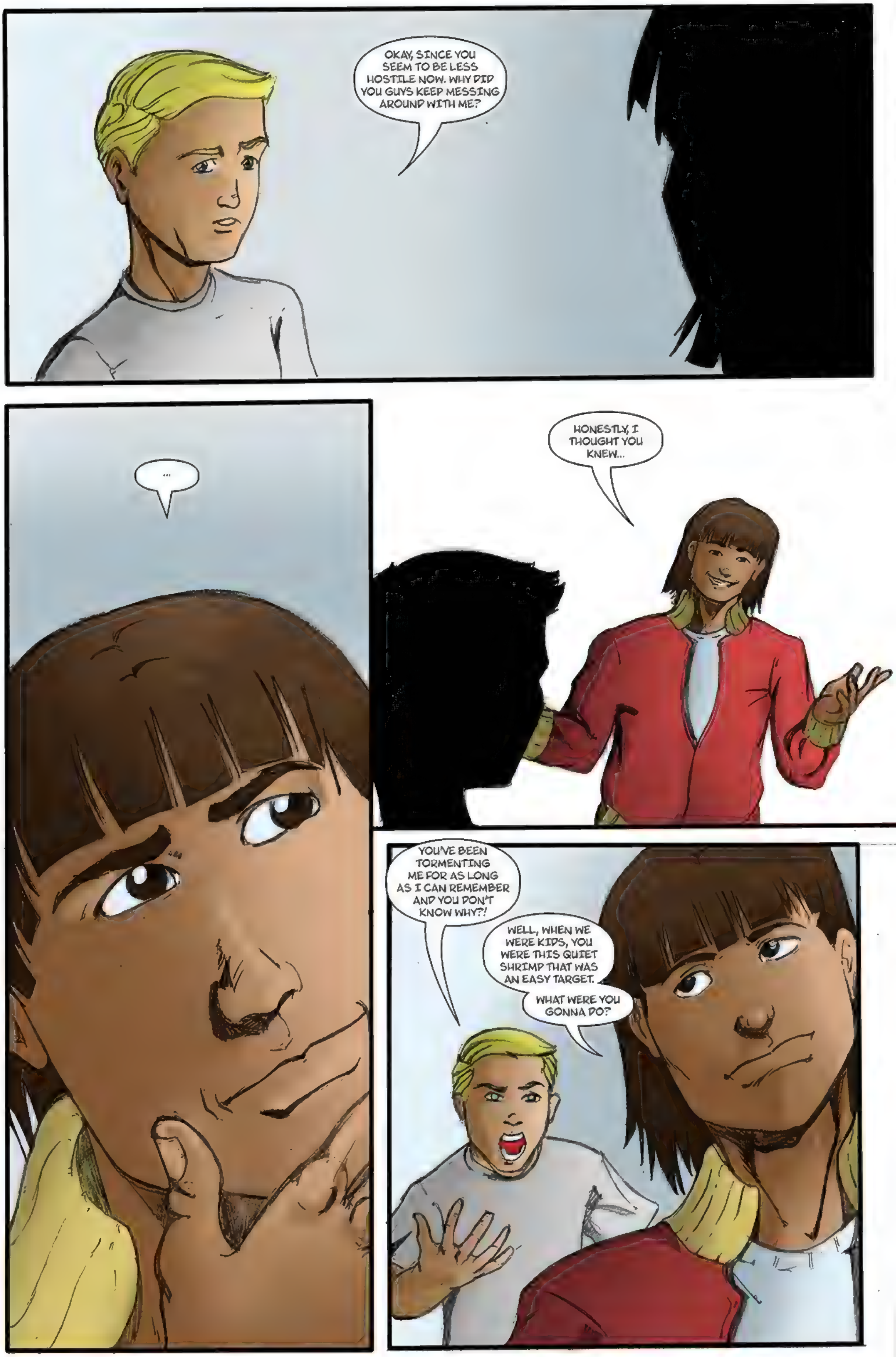
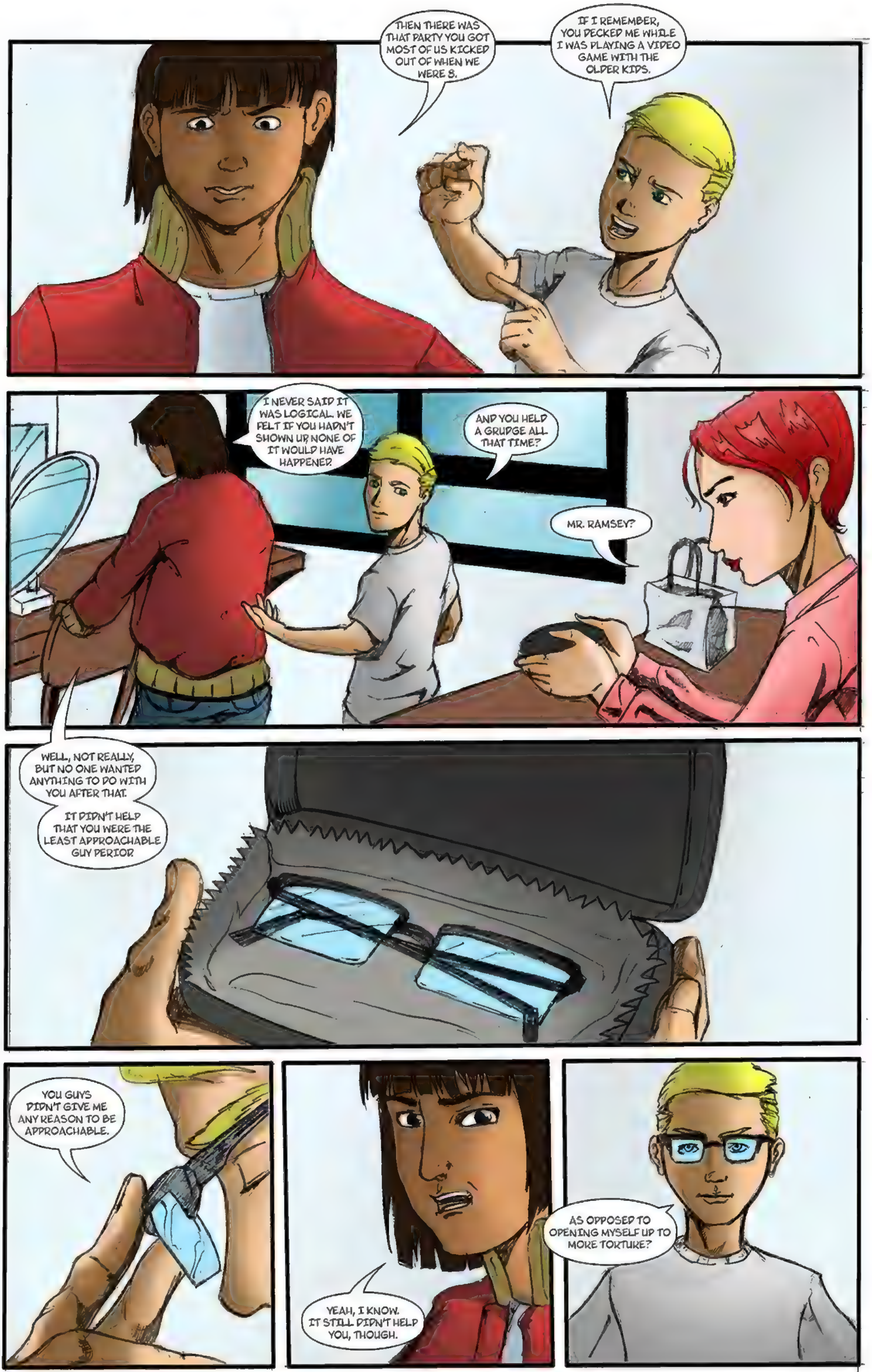
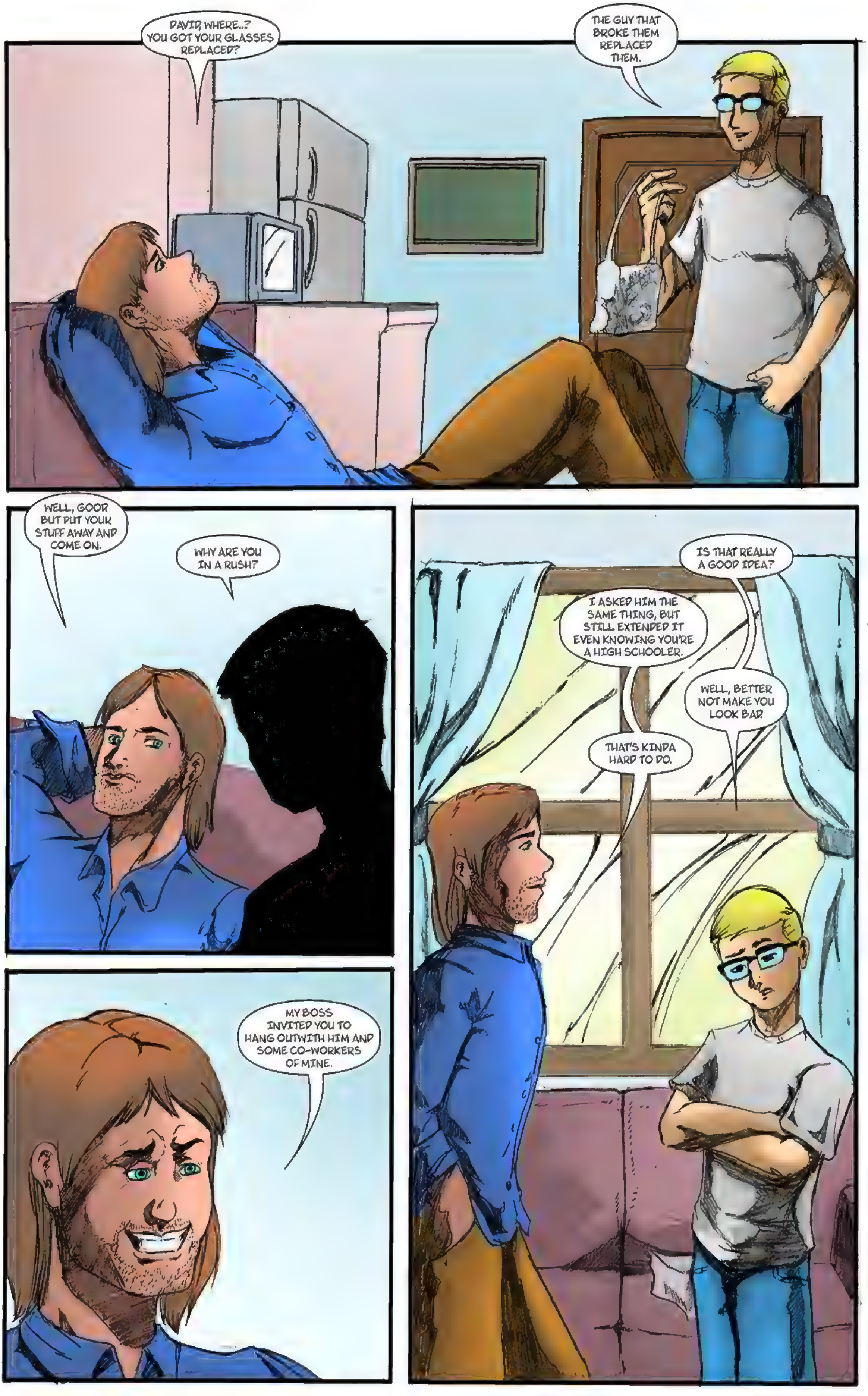
WHY ARE YOU SUDDENLY INTENT ON HELPING?
IT'S JUST SOMETING I FELT I NEEDED TO DO.
I DON'T EXPECT FORGIVENESS. I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO TALK TO ME EVER AGAIN AFTER THIS.
THANKS, BUT YOU KNOW THESE ARE LIKELY TO END UP BROKEN IN A WEEK, RIGHT?
HEY, I'M NOT GONNA... WAIT, I DIDN'T BREAK THEM THAT OFTEN.
YOU DIDN'T. DIDN'T MEAN NO ONE ELSE PLAYED A ROLE.
OF COURSE, VICTOR AND EVERY OTHER GUY IN OUR CLASS.

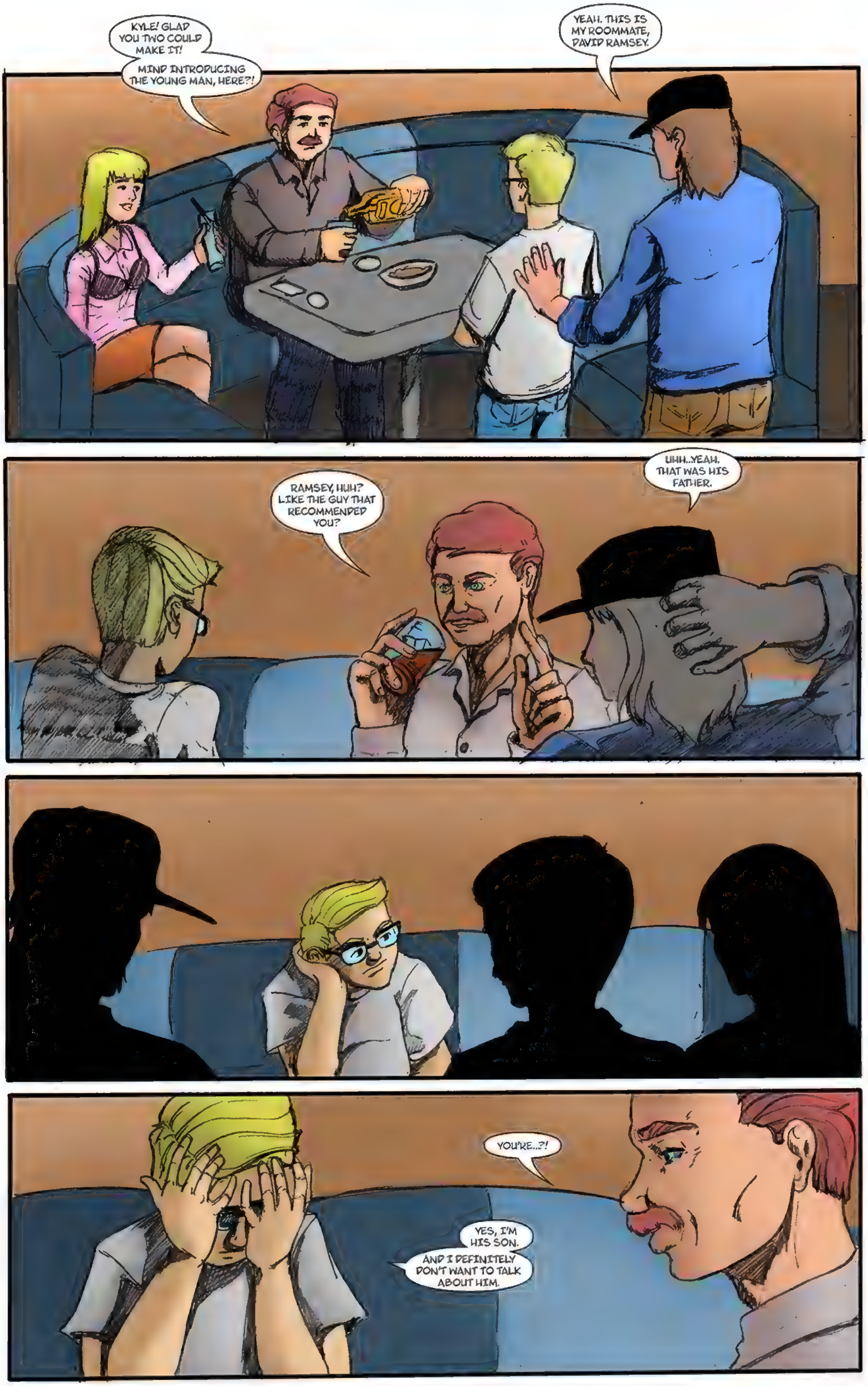


OKAY, SINCE YOU SEEM TO BE LESS HOSTILE NOW. WHY DID YOU GUYS KEEP MESSING AROUND WITH ME?
...
HONESTLY, I THOUGHT YOU KNEW...
YOU'VE BEEN TORMENTING ME FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHY?!
WELL, WHEN WE WERE KIDS, YOU WERE THIS QUIET SHRIMP THAT WAS AN EASY TARGET.
WHAT WERE YOU GONNA DO?


THEN THERE WAS THAT PARTY YOU GOT MOST OF US KICKED OUT OF WHEN WE WERE 8.
IF I REMEMBER, YOU DECKED ME WHILE I WAS PLAYING A VIDEO GAME WITH THE OLDER KIDS.
I NEVER SAID IT WAS LOGICAL. WE FELT IF YOU HADN'T SHOWN UP, NONE OF IT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED.
AND YOU HELD A GRUDGE ALL THAT TIME?
MR. RAMSEY?
WELL, NOT REALLY, BUT NO ONE WANTED ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOU AFTER THAT.
IT DIDN'T HELP THAT YOU WERE THE LEAST APPROACHABLE GUY PERIOD.
YOU GUYS DIDN'T GIVE ME ANY REASON TO BE APPROACHABLE.
YEAH, I KNOW. IT STILL DIDN'T HELP YOU, THOUGH.
AS OPPOSED TO OPENING MYSELF UP TO MORE TORTURE?

SO WHAT'S THE...
THE BITCH CAME BACK...
CRAP
THE VERY NE-
ANSWER
WHO WAS THAT?
NO ONE YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT.
WE'LL ADD THAT TO THE LIST OF THINGS WE'LL TALK ABOUT TOMORROW.


DAVID, WHERE...? YOU GOT YOUR GLASSES REPLACED?
THE GUY THAT BROKE THEM REPLACED THEM.
WELL, GOOD BUT PUT YOUR STUFF AWAY AND COME ON.
WHY ARE YOU IN A RUSH?
MY BOSS INVITED YOU TO HANG OUT WITH HIM AND SOME CO-WORKERS OF MINE.
IS THAT REALLY A GOOD IDEA?
I ASKED HIM THE SAME THING, BUT STILL EXTENDED IT EVEN KNOWING YOU'RE A HIGH SCHOOLER.
WELL, BETTER NOT MAKE YOU LOOK BAD.
THAT'S KINDA HARD TO DO.



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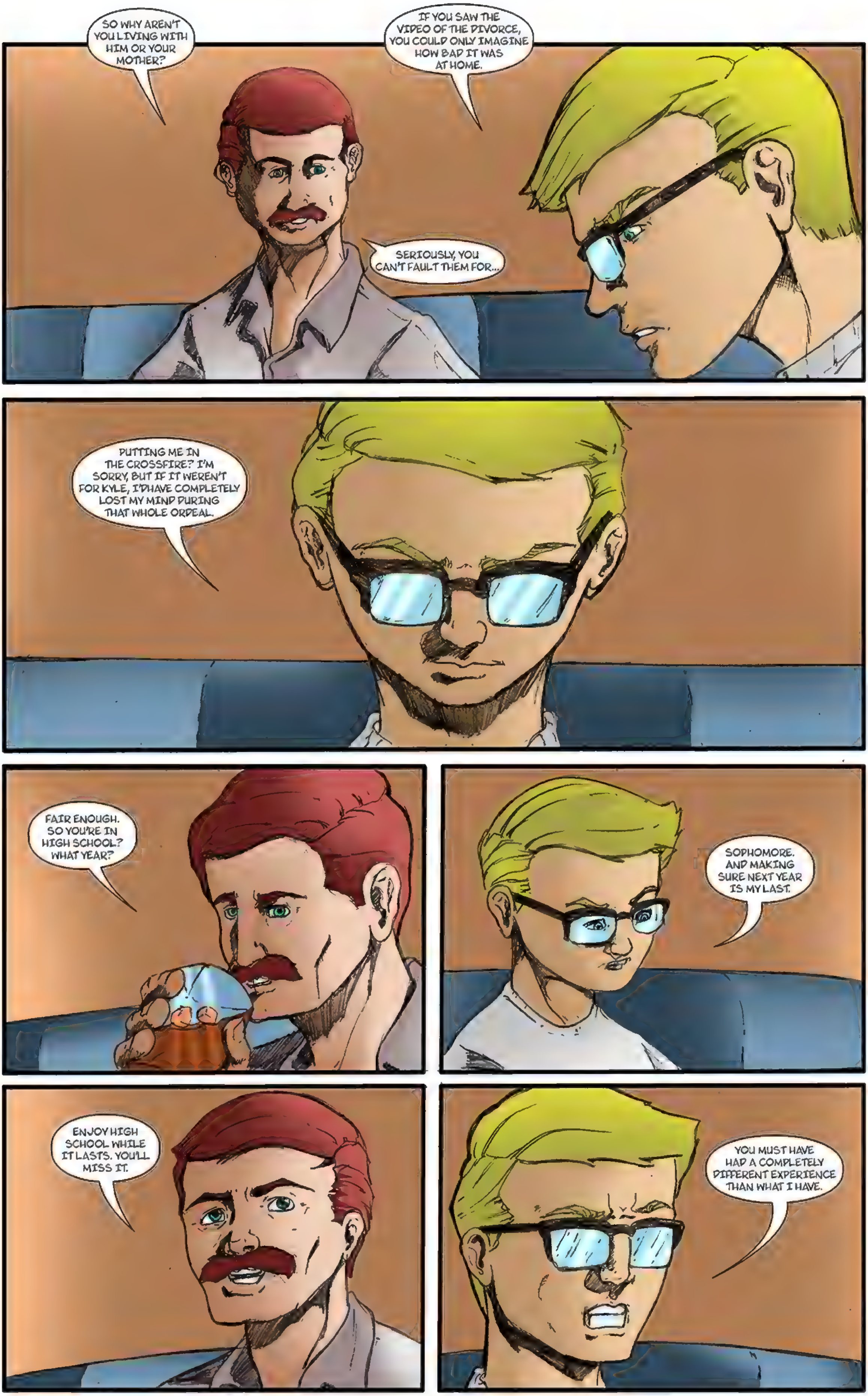
SO WHY AREN'T YOU LIVING WITH HIM OR YOUR MOTHER?
IF YOU SAW THE VIDEO OF THE DIVORCE, YOU COULD ONLY IMAGINE HOW BAD IT WAS AT HOME.
SERIOUSLY, YOU CAN'T FAULT THEM FOR...
PUTTING ME IN THE CROSSFIRE? I'M SORRY, BUT IF IT WEREN'T FOR KYLE, I'D HAVE COMPLETELY LOST MY MIND DURING THAT WHOLE ORDEAL.
FAIR ENOUGH. SO YOU'RE IN HIGH SCHOOL? WHAT YEAR?
SOPHOMORE. AND MAKING SURE NEXT YEAR IS MY LAST.
ENJOY HIGH SCHOOL WHILE IT LASTS. YOU'LL MISS IT.
YOU MUST HAVE HAD A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE THAN WHAT I HAVE.

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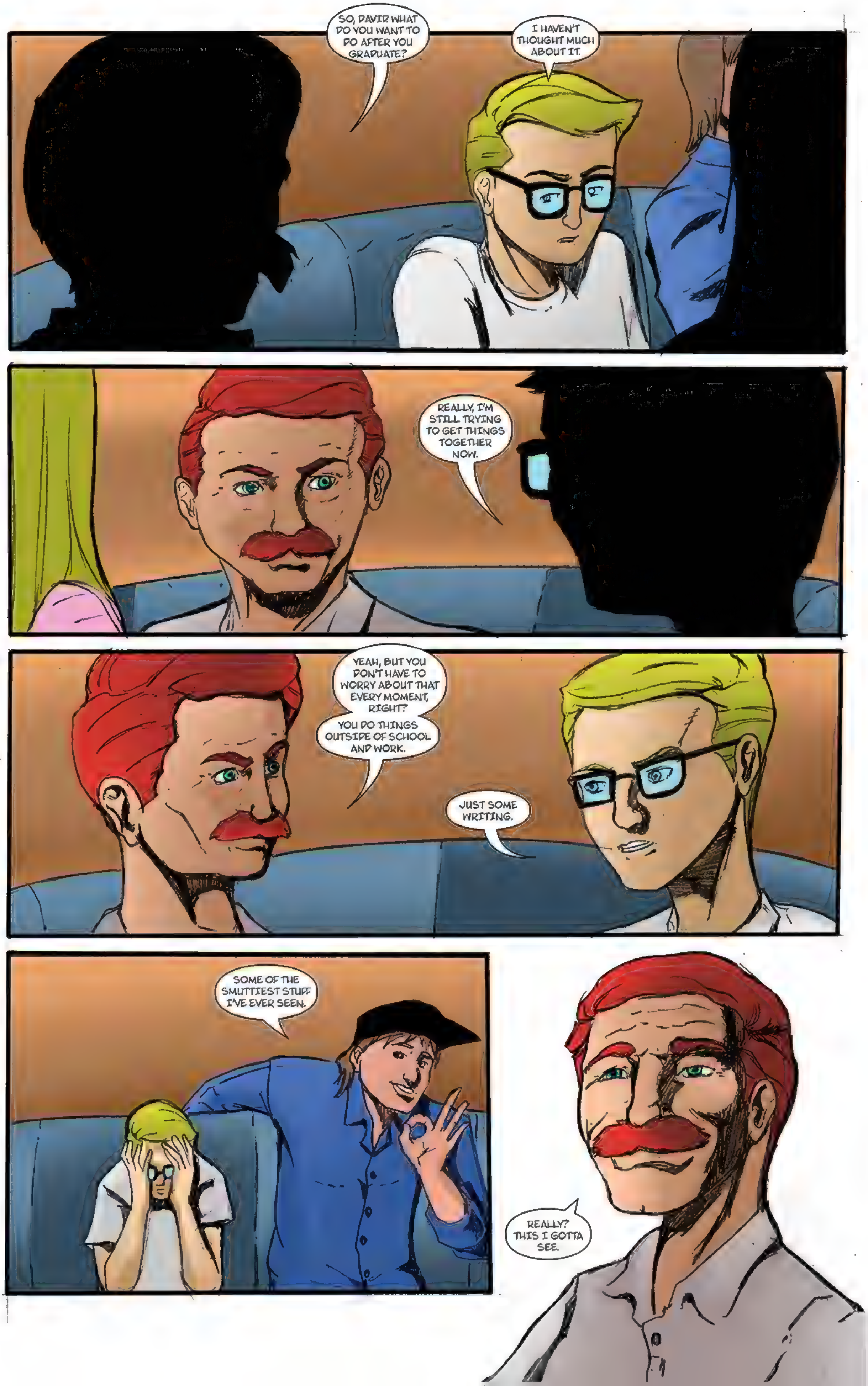
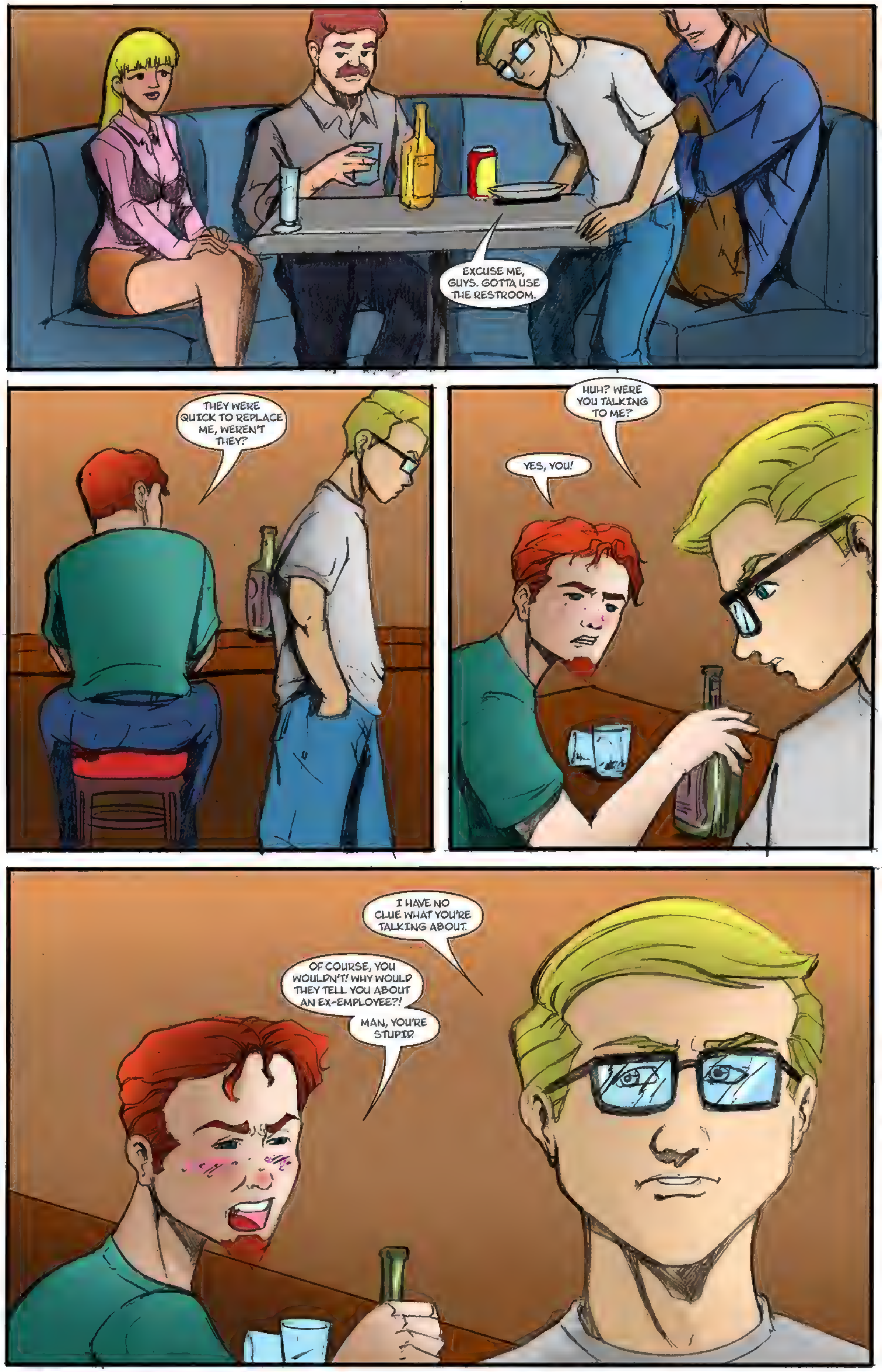
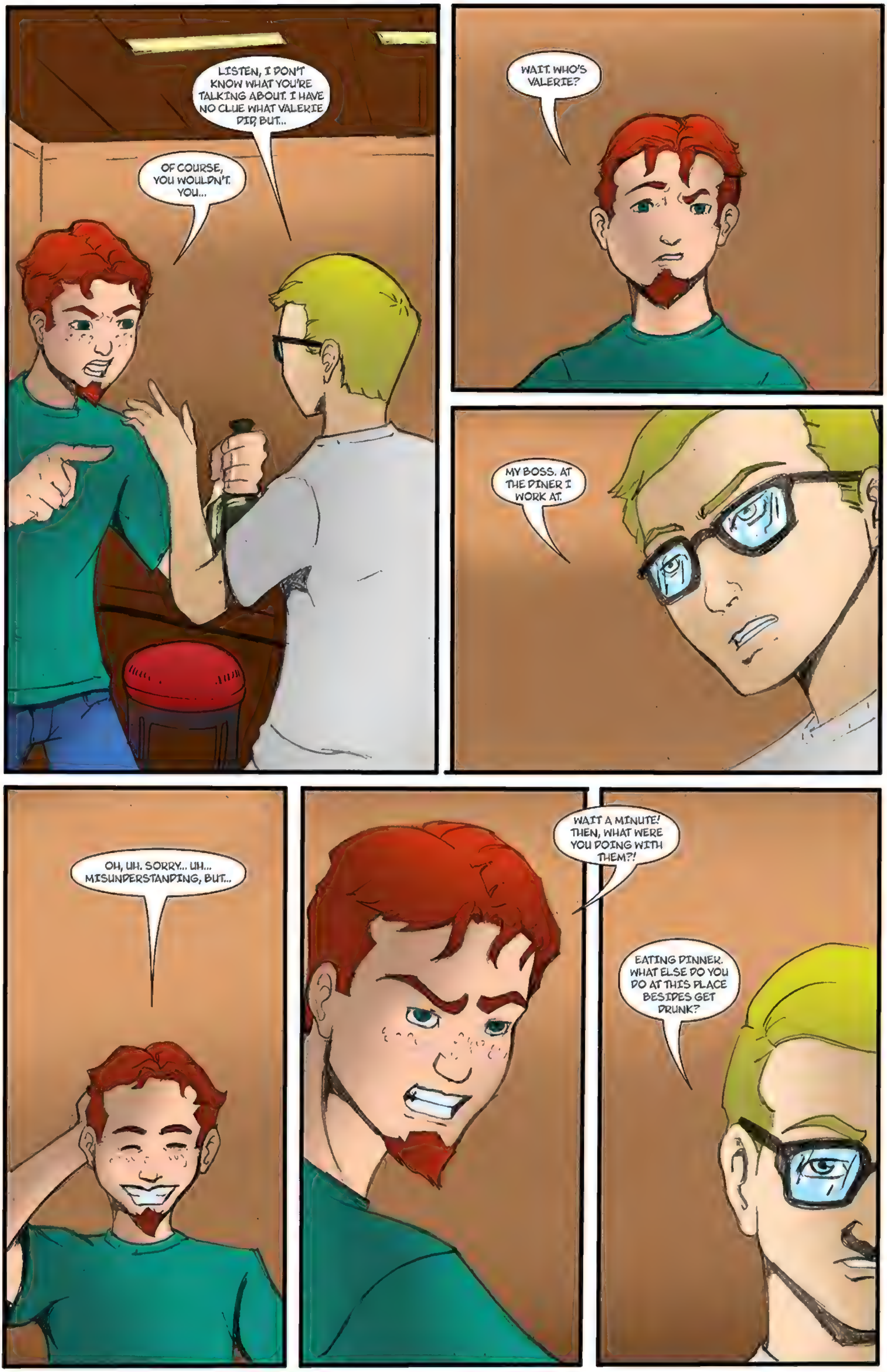
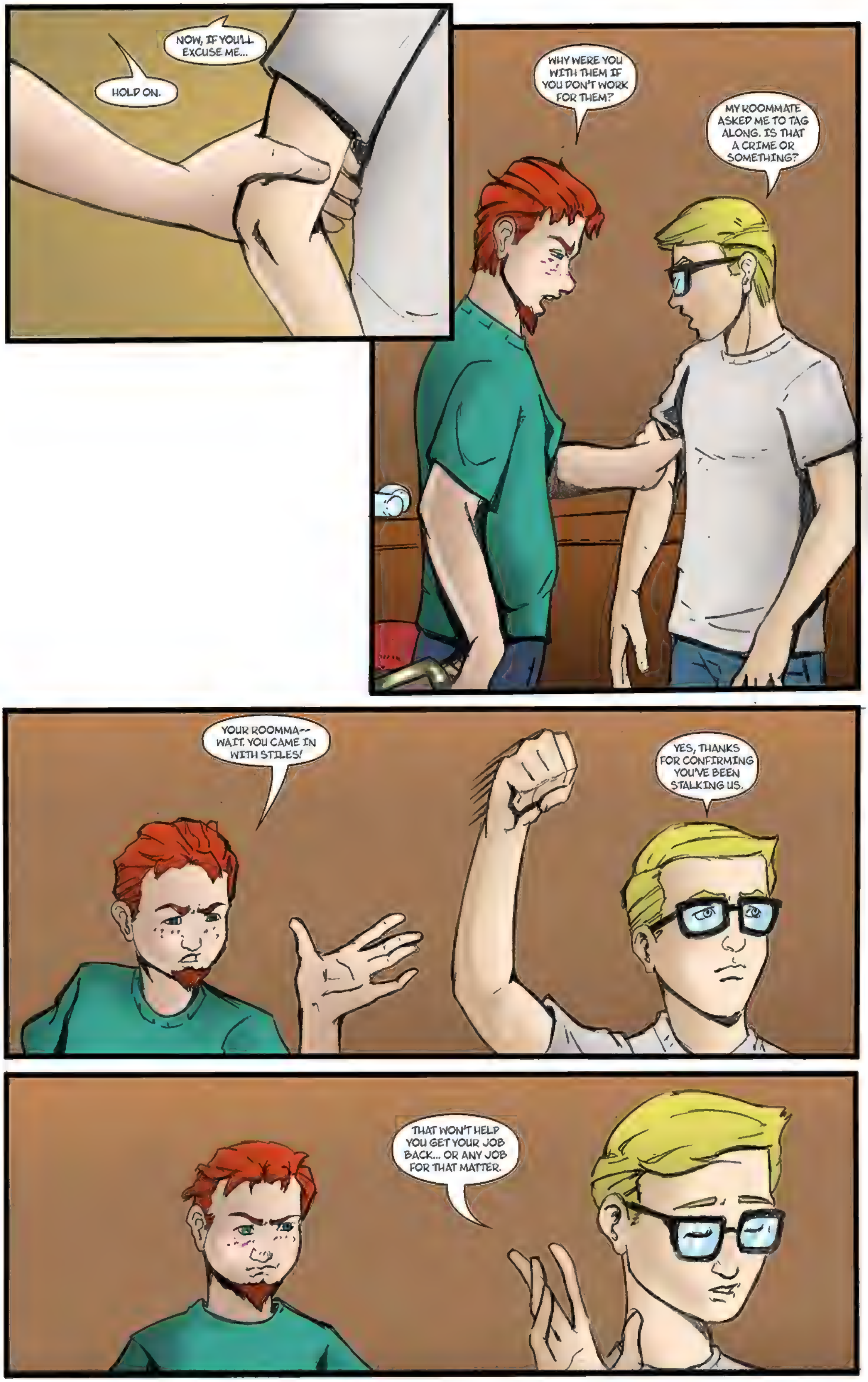
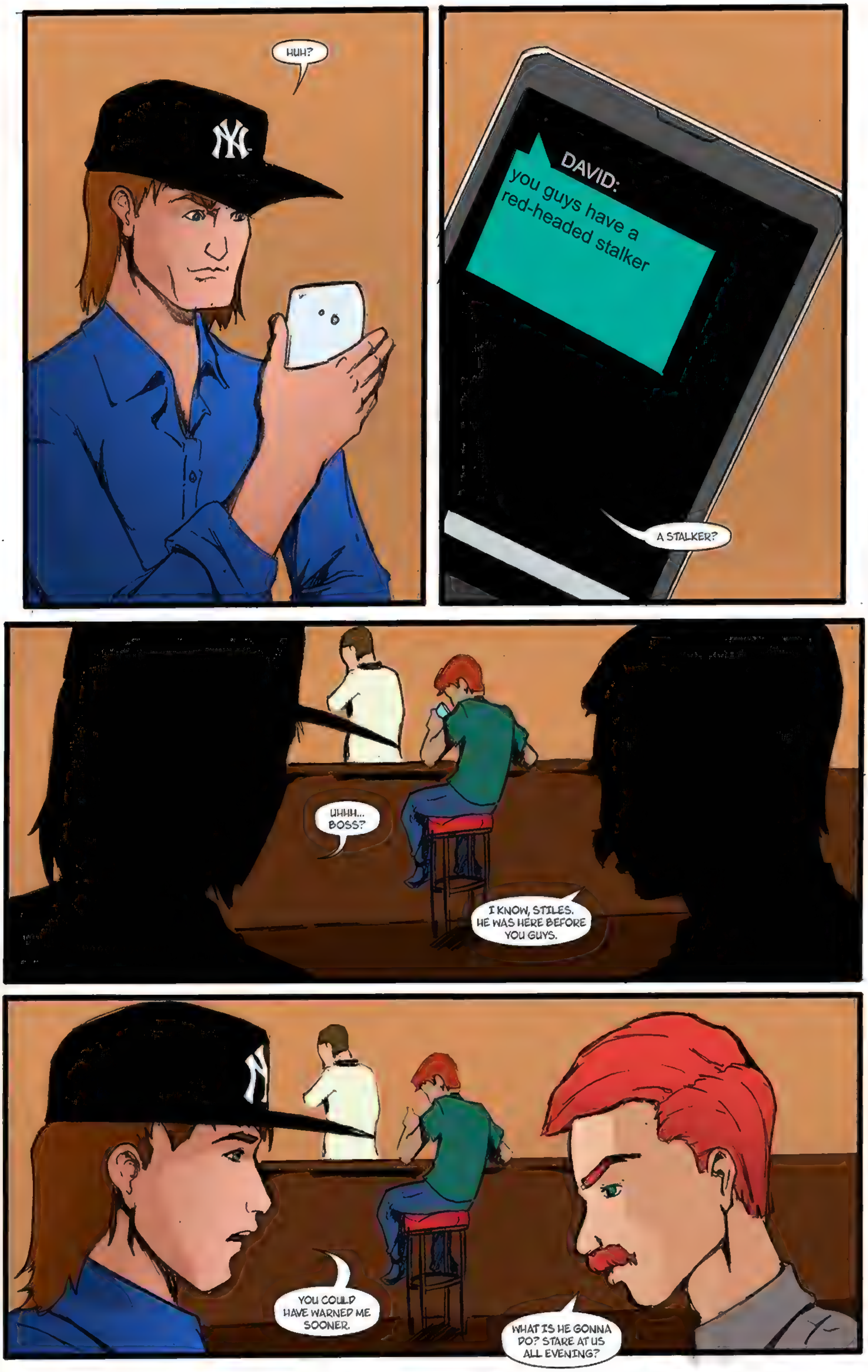

SO, DAVID? WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO AFTER YOU GRADUATE?
I HAVEN'T THOUGHT MUCH ABOUT IT.
REALLY, I'M STILL TRYING TO GET THINGS TOGETHER NOW.
YEAH, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT EVERY MOMENT, RIGHT?
YOU DO THINGS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL AND WORK.
JUST SOME WRITING.
SOME OF THE SMUTTIEST STUFF I'VE EVER SEEN.
REALLY? THIS I GOTTA SEE.


EXCUSE ME, GUYS. GOTTA USE THE RESTROOM.
THEY WERE QUICK TO REPLACE ME, WEREN'T THEY?
HUH? WERE YOU TALKING TO ME?
YES, YOU!
I HAVE NO CLUE WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
OF COURSE, YOU WOULDN'T! WHY WOULD THEY TELL YOU ABOUT AN EX-EMPLOYEE?!
MAN, YOU'RE STUPID.


LISTEN, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. I HAVE NO CLUE WHAT VALERIE DID, BUT...
OF COURSE, YOU WOULDN'T. YOU...
WAIT. WHO'S VALERIE?
MY BOSS. AT THE DINER I WORK AT.
OH, UH. SORRY... UH... MISUNDERSTANDING, BUT...
WAIT A MINUTE! THEN, WHAT WERE YOU DOING WITH THEM?!
EATING DINNER. WHAT ELSE DO YOU DO AT THIS PLACE BESIDES GET DRUNK?


NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...
HOLD ON.
WHY WERE YOU WITH THEM IF YOU DON'T WORK FOR THEM?
MY ROOMMATE ASKED ME TO TAG ALONG. IS THAT A CRIME OR SOMETHING?
YOUR ROOMMA-- WAIT. YOU CAME IN WITH STILES!
YES, THANKS FOR CONFIRMING YOU'VE BEEN STALKING US.
THAT WON'T HELP YOU GET YOUR JOB BACK... OR ANY JOB FOR THAT MATTER.



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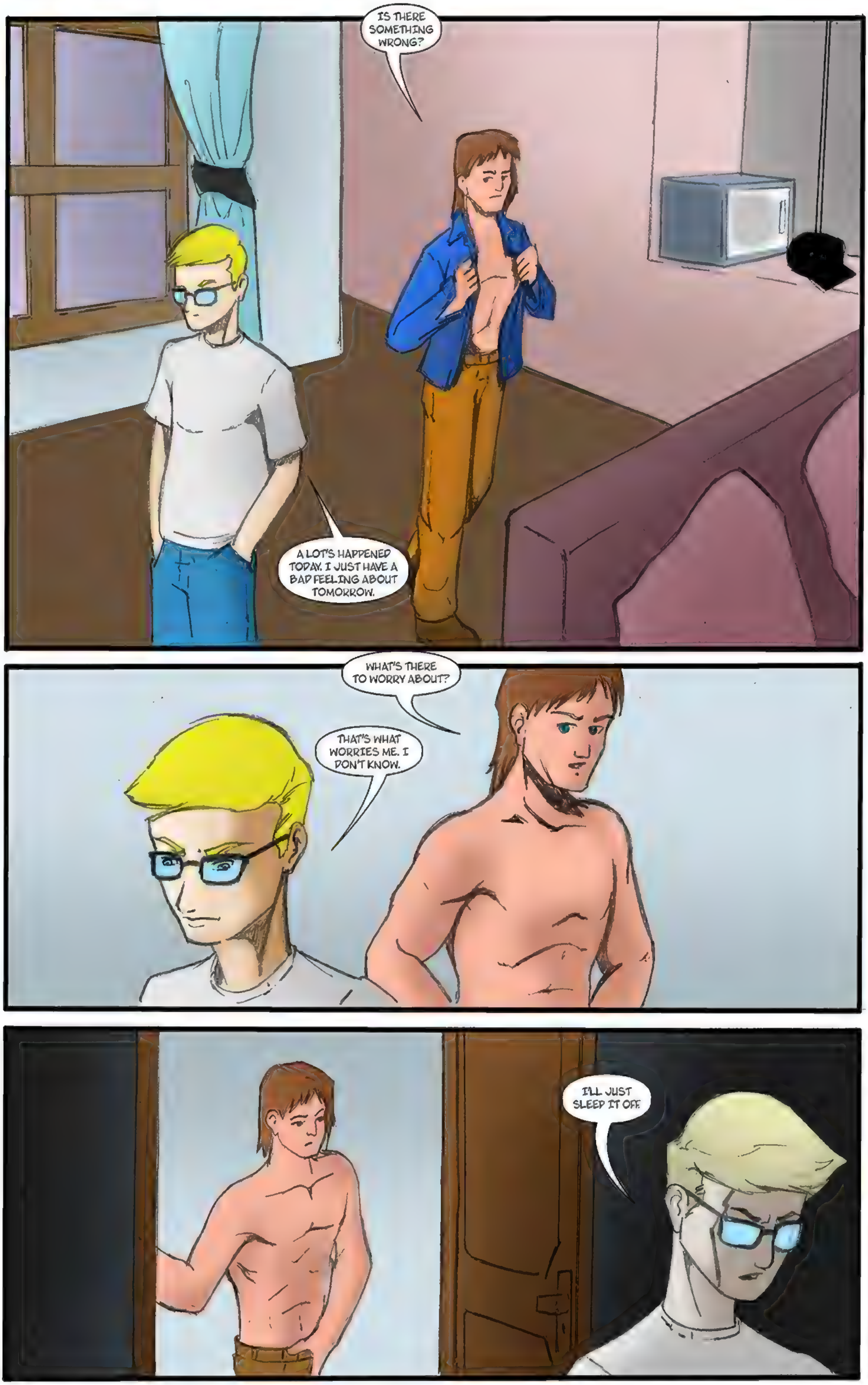

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HE'S PROBABLY IN CLASS, SO AT LEAST, I'LL HAVE TIME TO GET WORK DONE.
IF HE WOULD ANSWER HIS PHONE, WE'D BE BACK BEFORE LUNCH, BUT HE HAS TO MAKE IT DIFFICULT.
WHERE TO, MAAM?
TAXI
SOME PLACE WITH WI-FI AND DECENT FOOD IN THIS RATHOLE TOWN.
BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU CALL THIS...
I LIVED HERE FAR TOO LONG. I HAVE THE RIGHT TO CALL IT WHAT IT IS.

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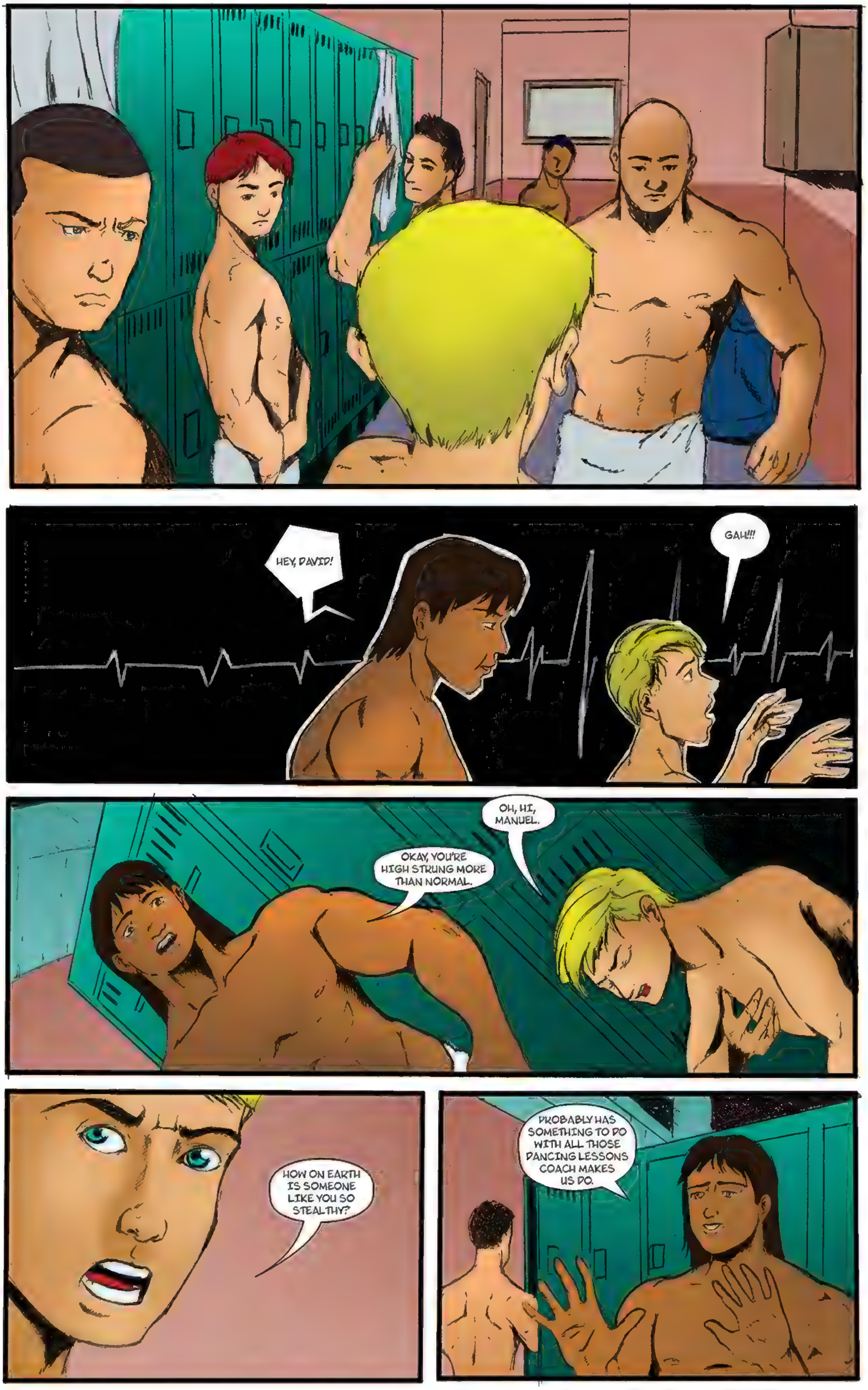
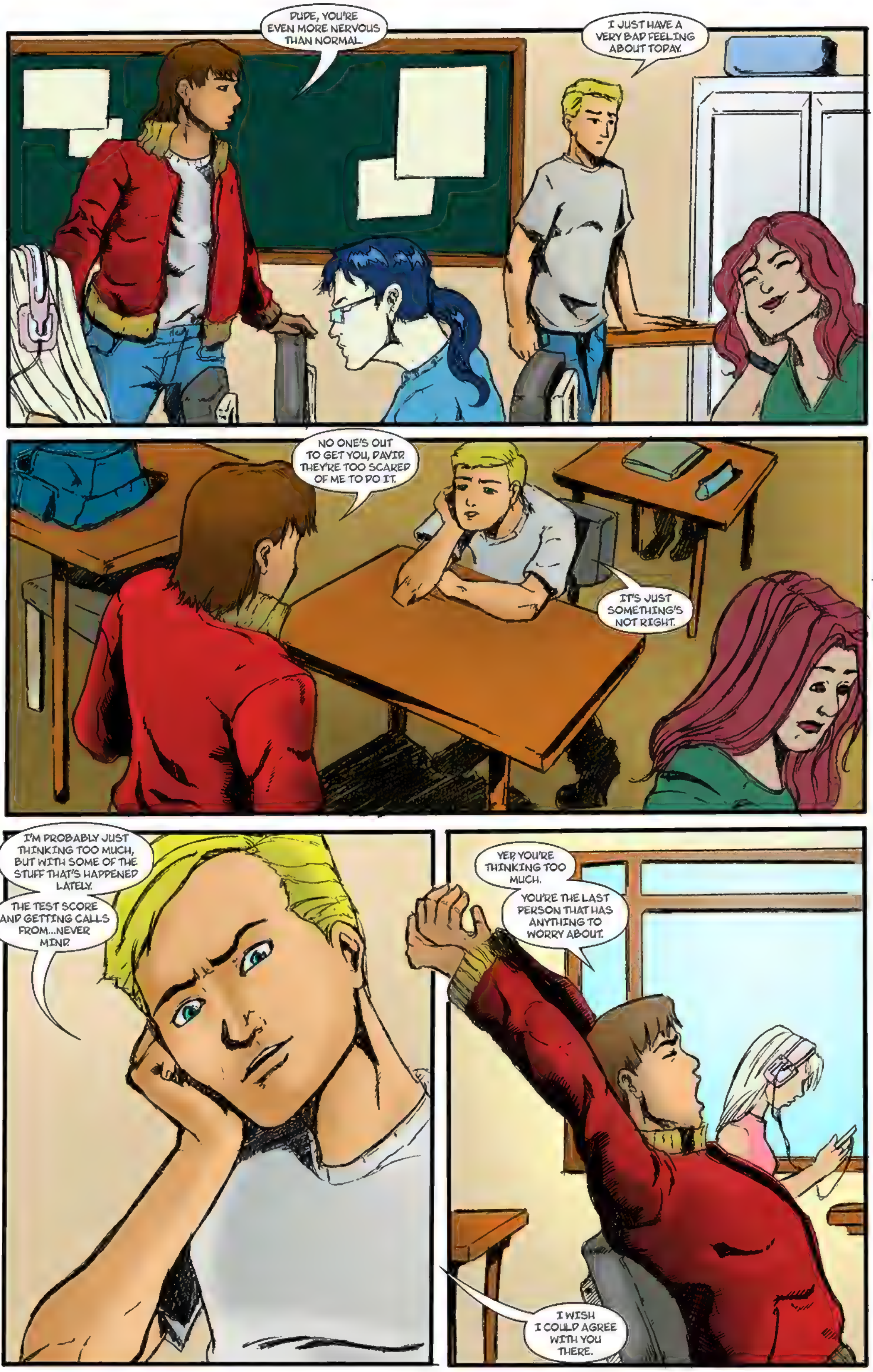


HEY, DAVID!
GAH!!!
OH, HI, MANUEL.
OKAY, YOU'RE HIGH STRUNG MORE THAN NORMAL.
HOW ON EARTH IS SOMEONE LIKE YOU SO STEALTHY?
PROBABLY HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH ALL THOSE DANCING LESSONS COACH MAKES US DO.



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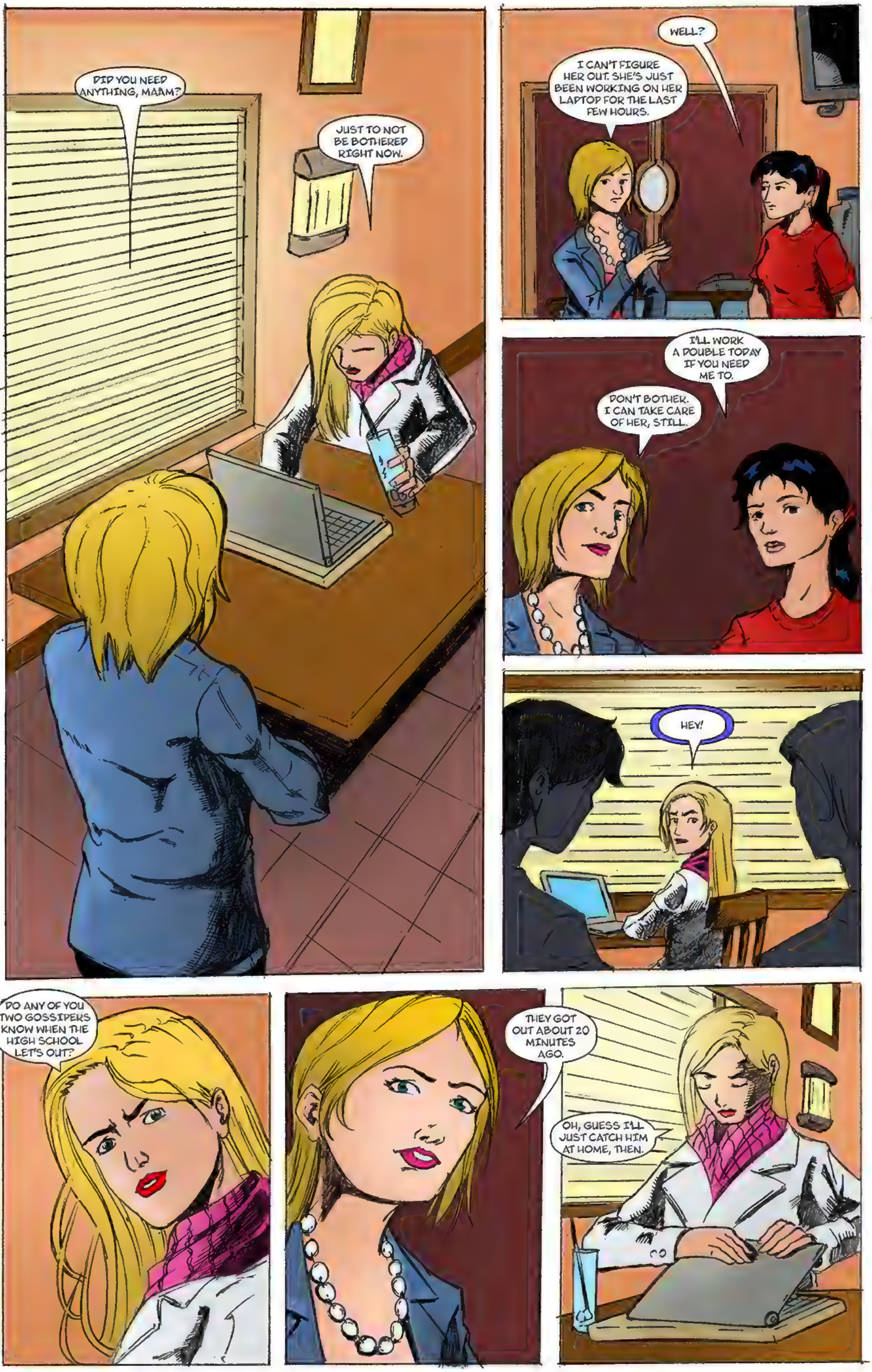
THIS ISN'T ANY GOOD.
DAVID WAS EVEN MORE WORRIED THAN NORMAL THIS MORNING. AND THAT'S GOT ME WORRIED..
HEY, BOSS. I'M HEADING OUT EARLY. I GOT SOMETHING I NEED TO TAKE CARE OF.
THAT'S FINE, KYLE. YOU TAKE CARE.
I HATE SKIPPING OUT ON WORK, BUT I HAVE A BAD FEELING DAVID'S OVER HIS HEAD HERE.



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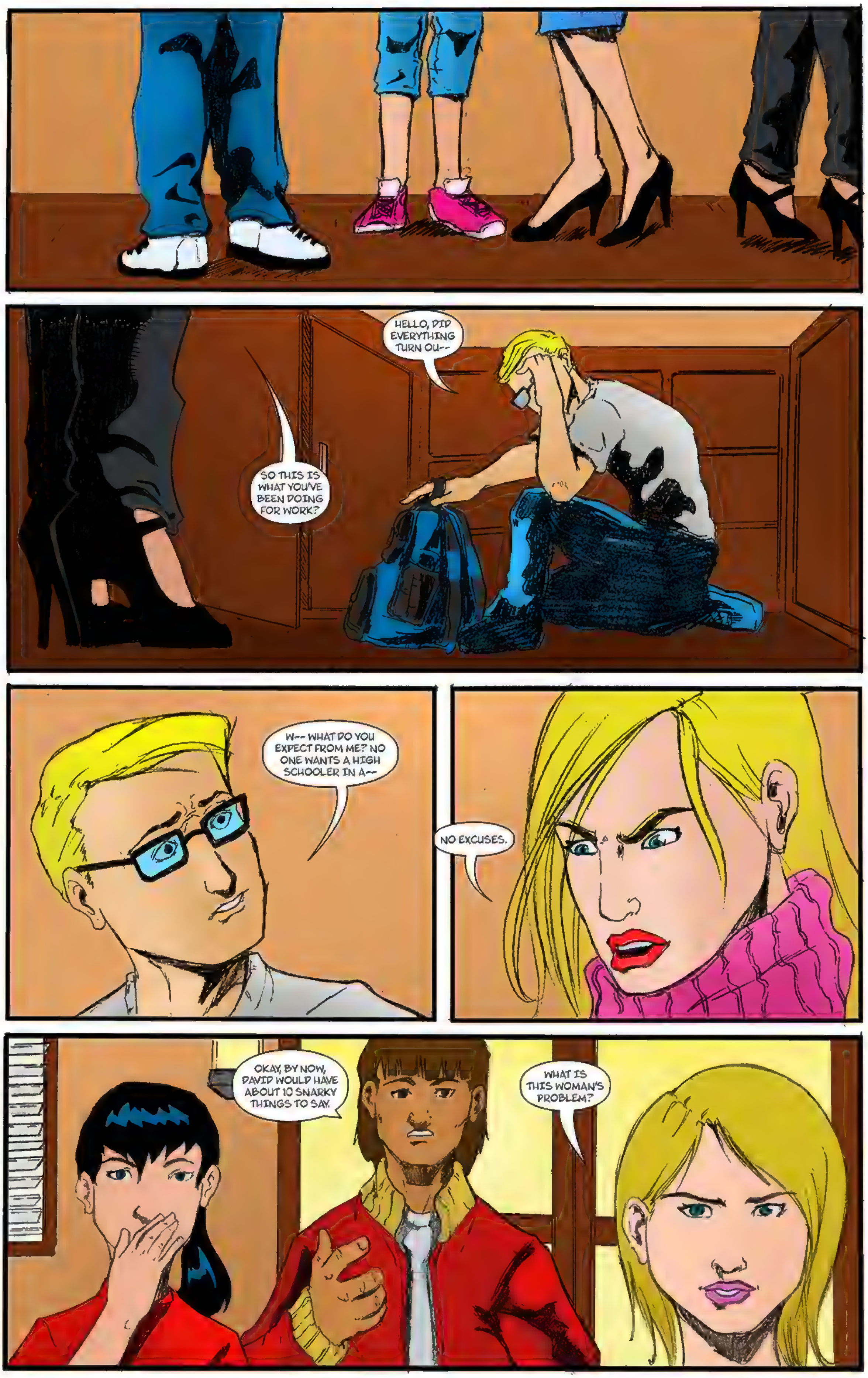
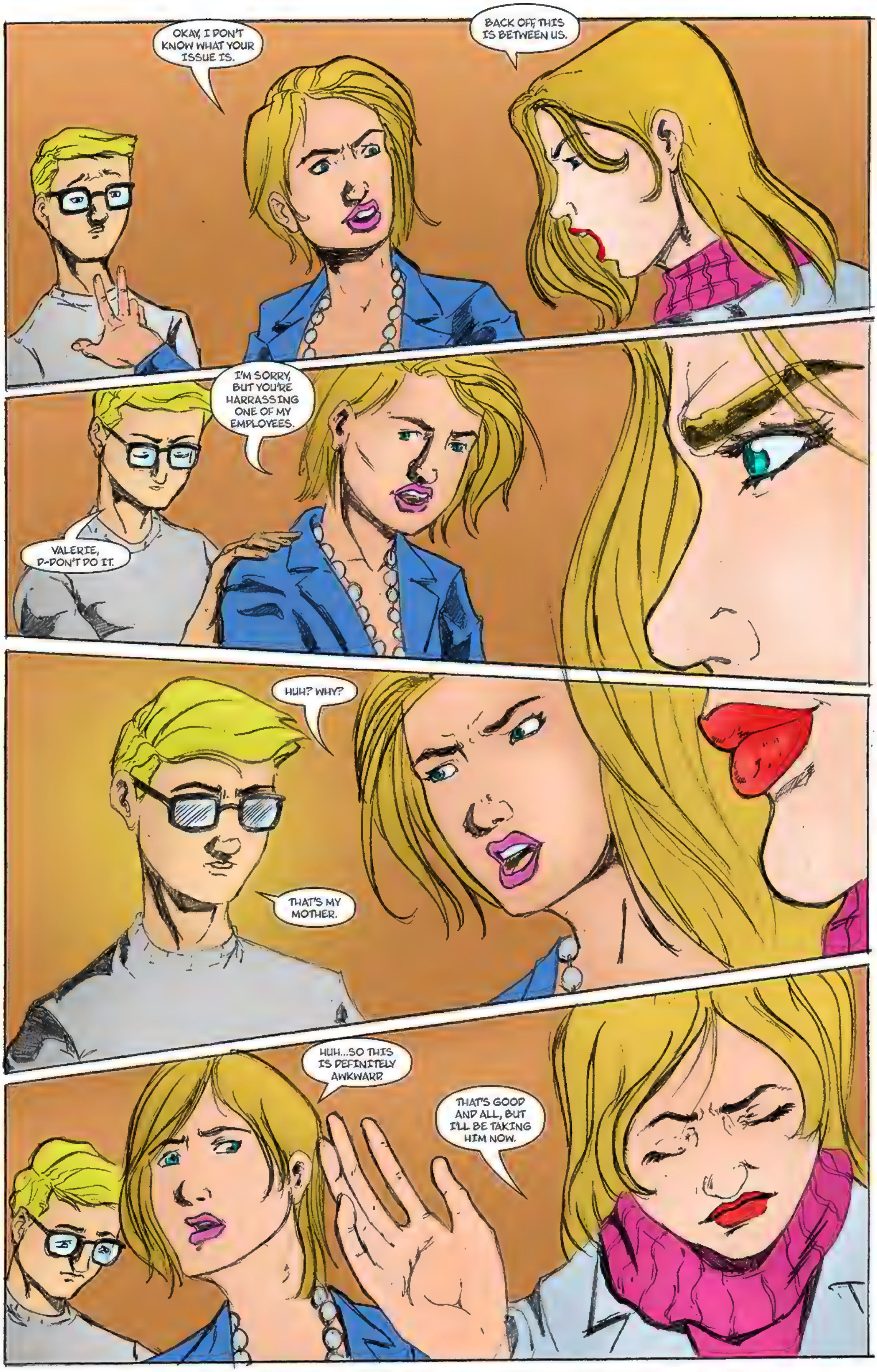

HELLO, DID EVERYTHING TURN OU--
SO THIS IS WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING FOR WORK?
W-- WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM ME? NO ONE WANTS A HIGH SCHOOLER IN A--
NO EXCUSES.
OKAY, BY NOW, DAVID WOULD HAVE ABOUT 10 SNARKY THINGS TO SAY.
WHAT IS THIS WOMAN'S PROBLEM?



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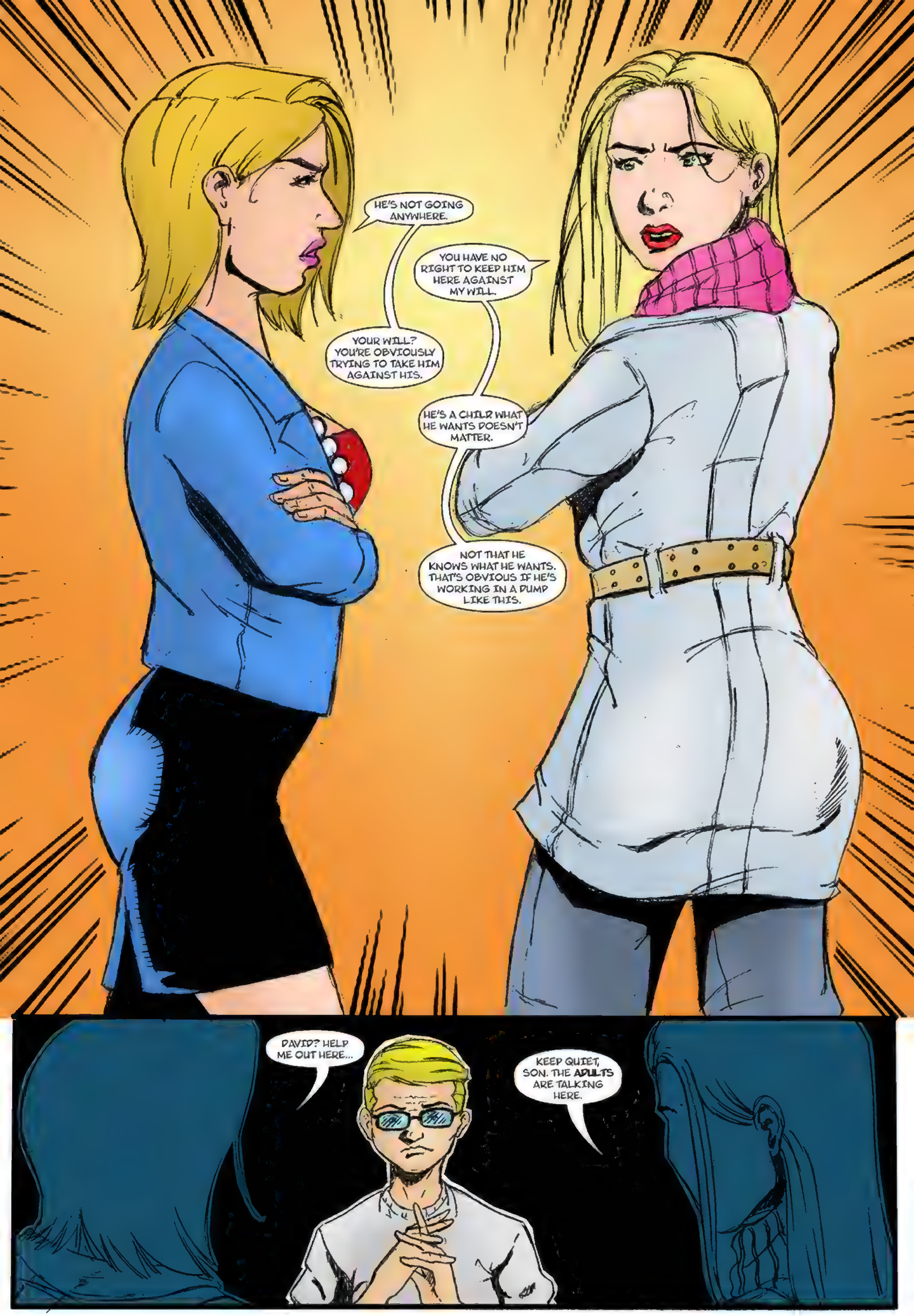
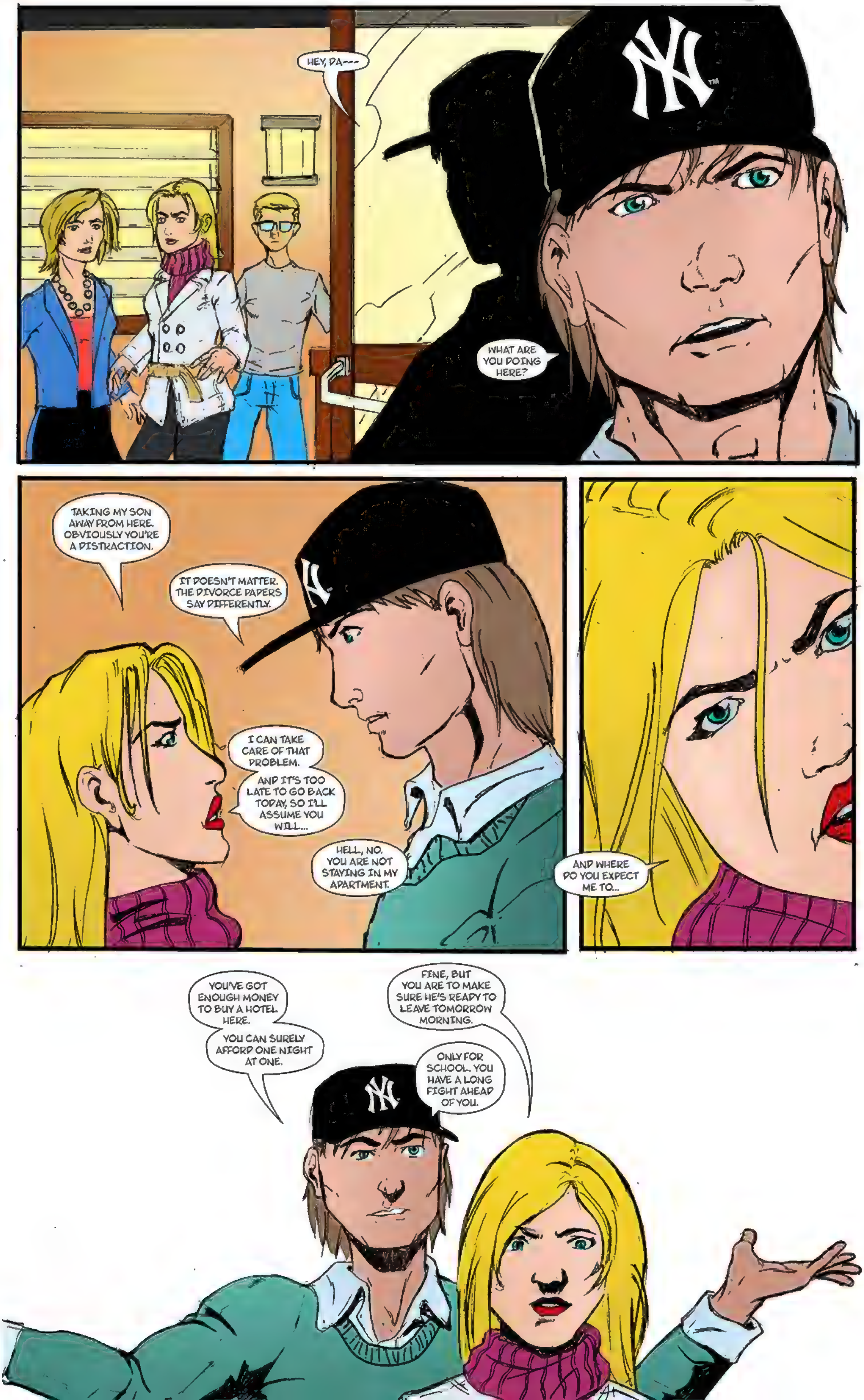
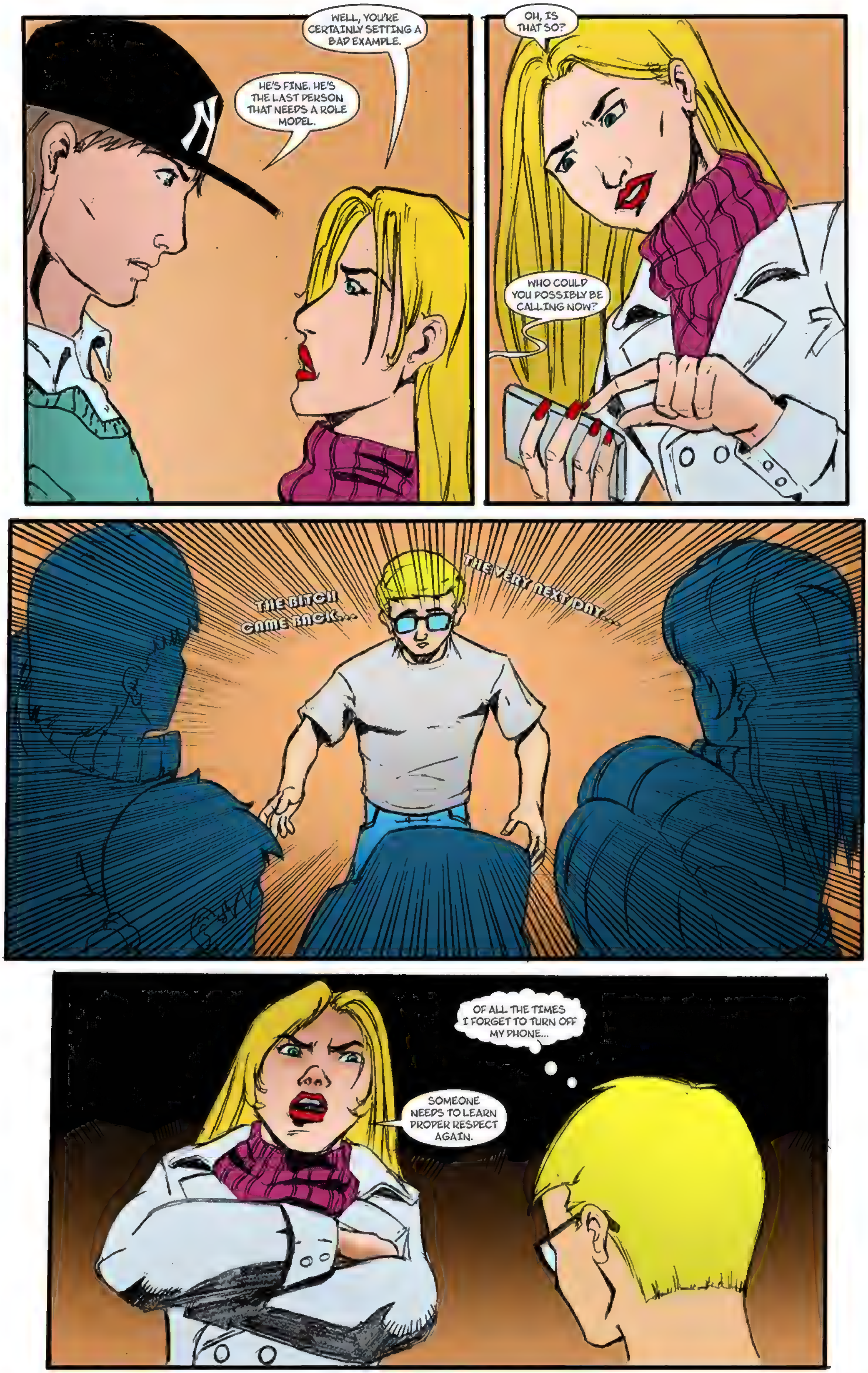

HE'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE.
YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO KEEP HIM HERE AGAINST MY WILL.
YOUR WILL? YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY TRYING TO TAKE HIM AGAINST HIS.
HE'S A CHILD WHAT HE WANTS DOESN'T MATTER.
NOT THAT HE KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS. THAT'S OBVIOUS IF HE'S WORKING IN A DUMP LIKE THIS.
DAVID? HELP ME OUT HERE...
KEEP QUIET, SON. THE ADULTS ARE TALKING HERE.


HEY, DA---
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
TAKING MY SON AWAY FROM HERE. OBVIOUSLY YOU'RE A DISTRACTION.
IT DOESN'T MATTER. THE DIVORCE PAPERS SAY DIFFERENTLY.
I CAN TAKE CARE OF THAT PROBLEM.
AND IT'S TOO LATE TO GO BACK TODAY, SO I'LL ASSUME YOU WILL...
HELL, NO. YOU ARE NOT STAYING IN MY APARTMENT.
AND WHERE DO YOU EXPECT ME TO...
YOU'VE GOT ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY A HOTEL HERE.
YOU CAN SURELY AFFORD ONE NIGHT AT ONE.
FINE, BUT YOU ARE TO MAKE SURE HE'S READY TO LEAVE TOMORROW MORNING.
ONLY FOR SCHOOL. YOU HAVE A LONG FIGHT AHEAD OF YOU.



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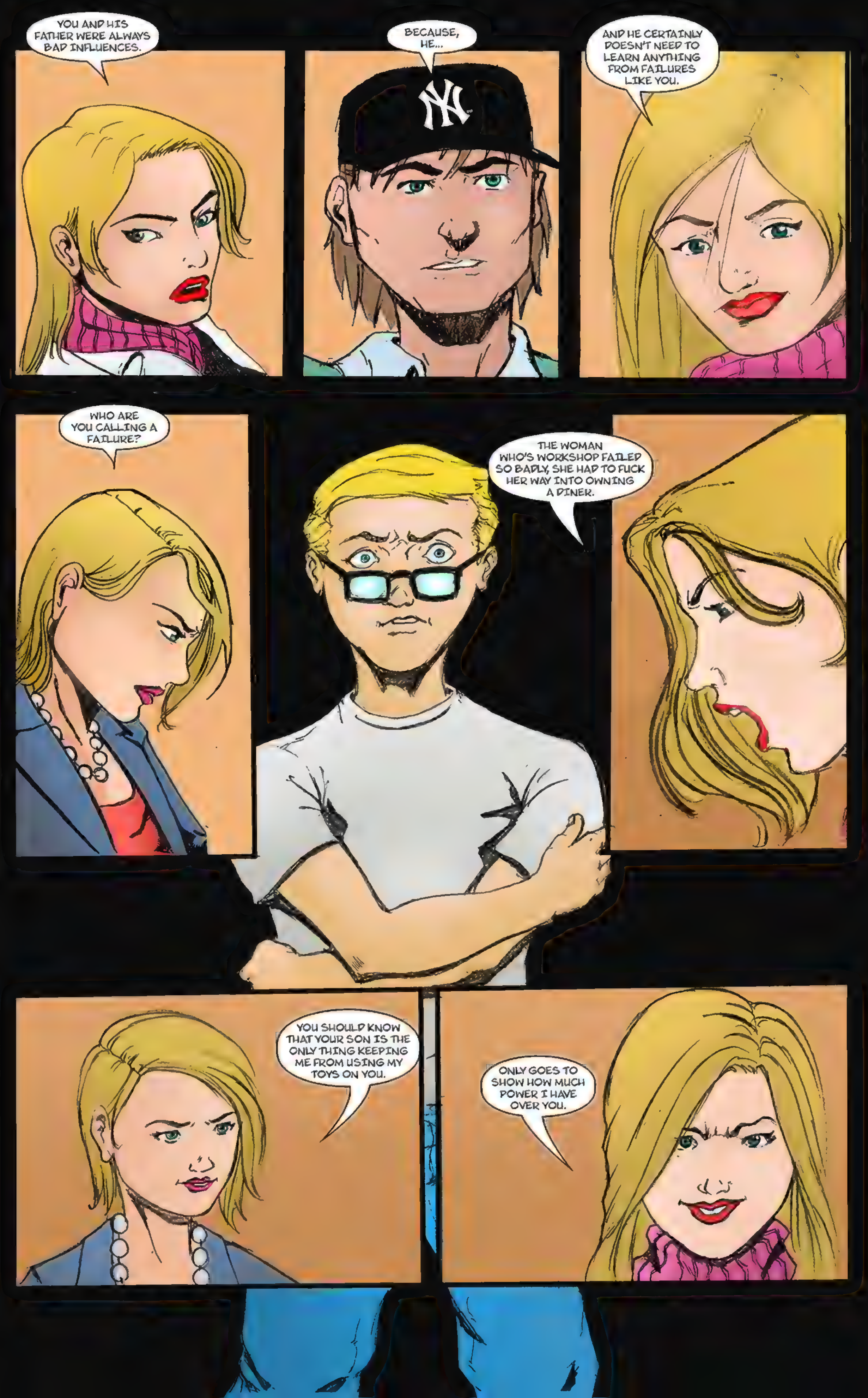
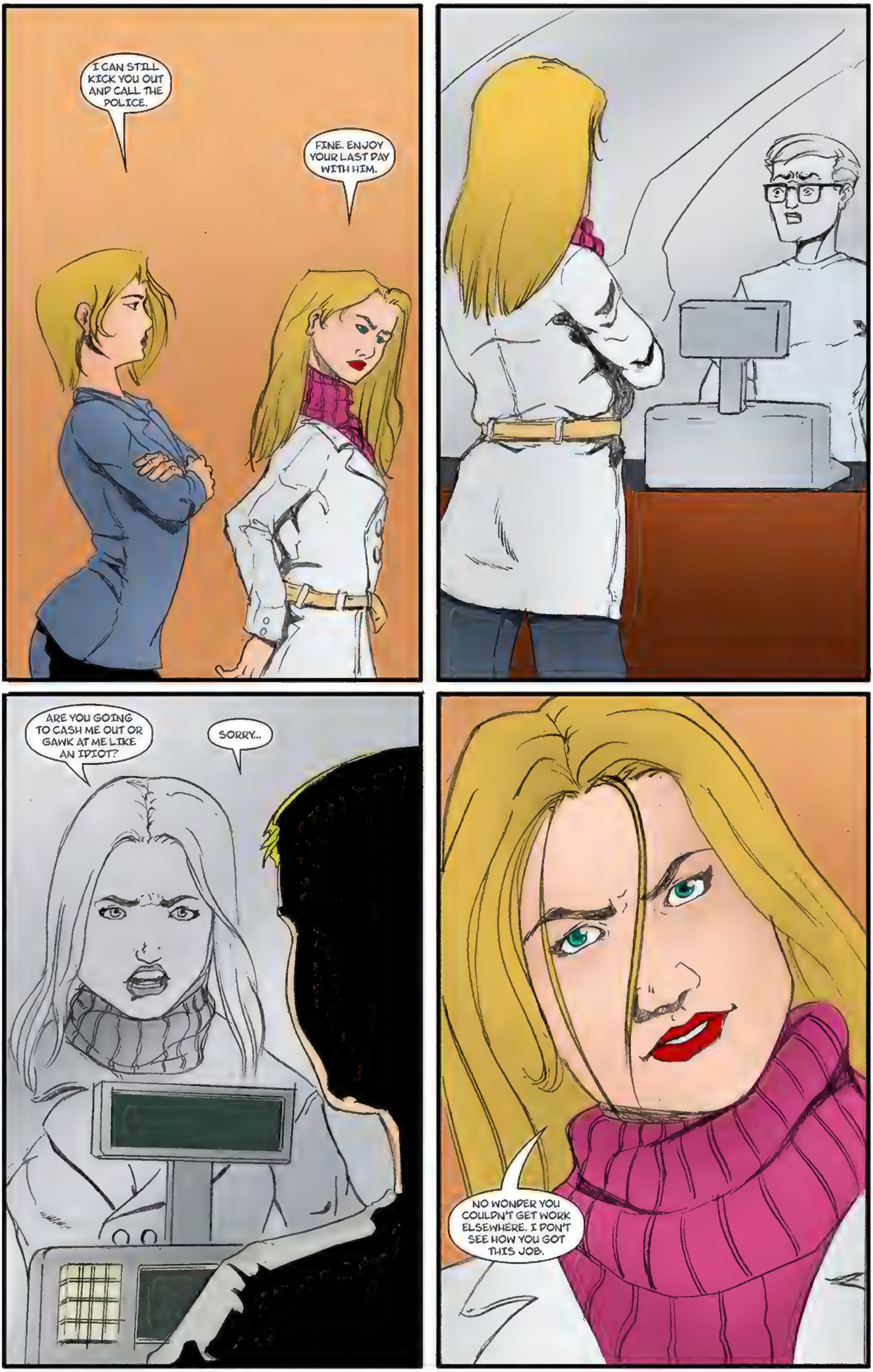
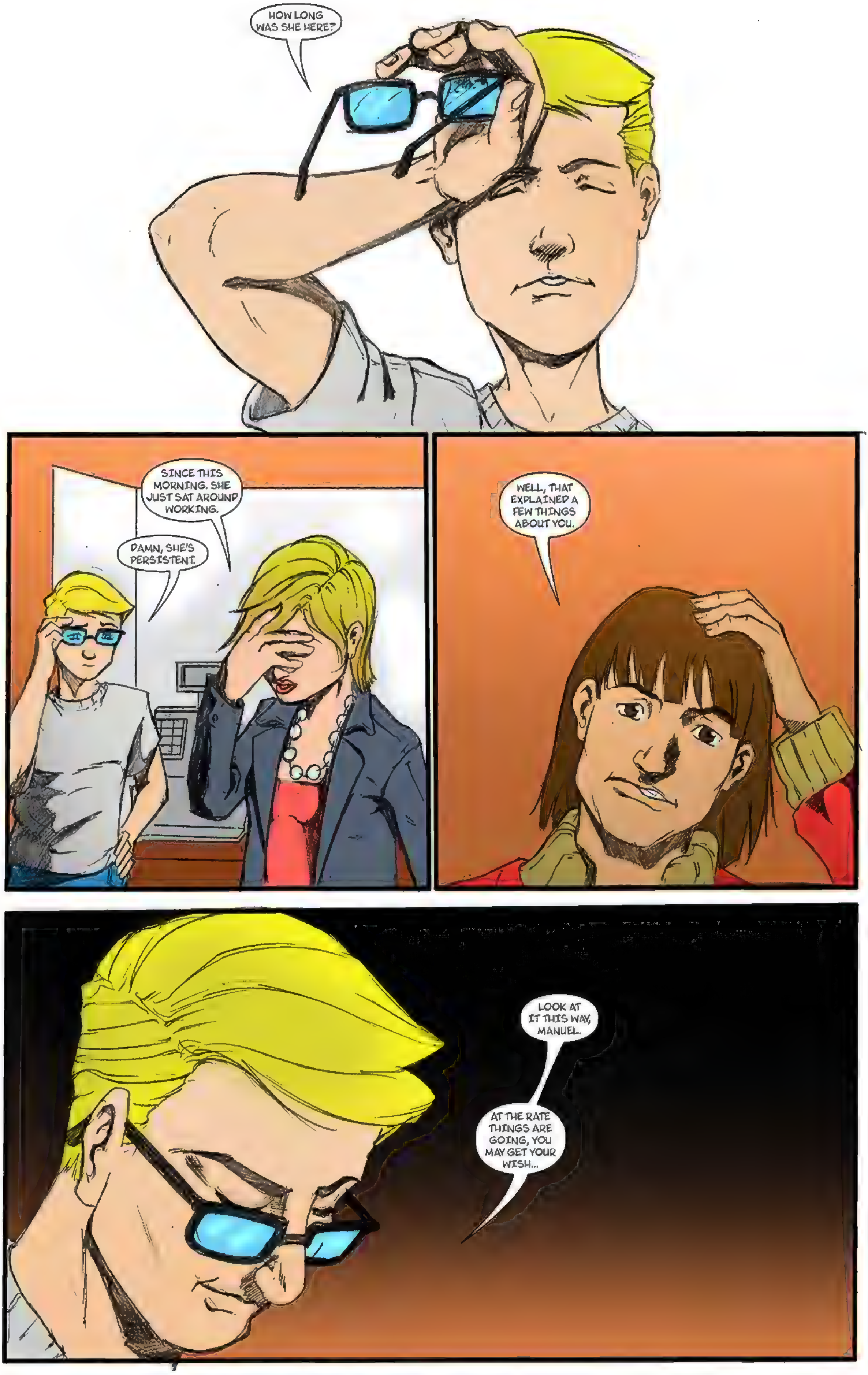
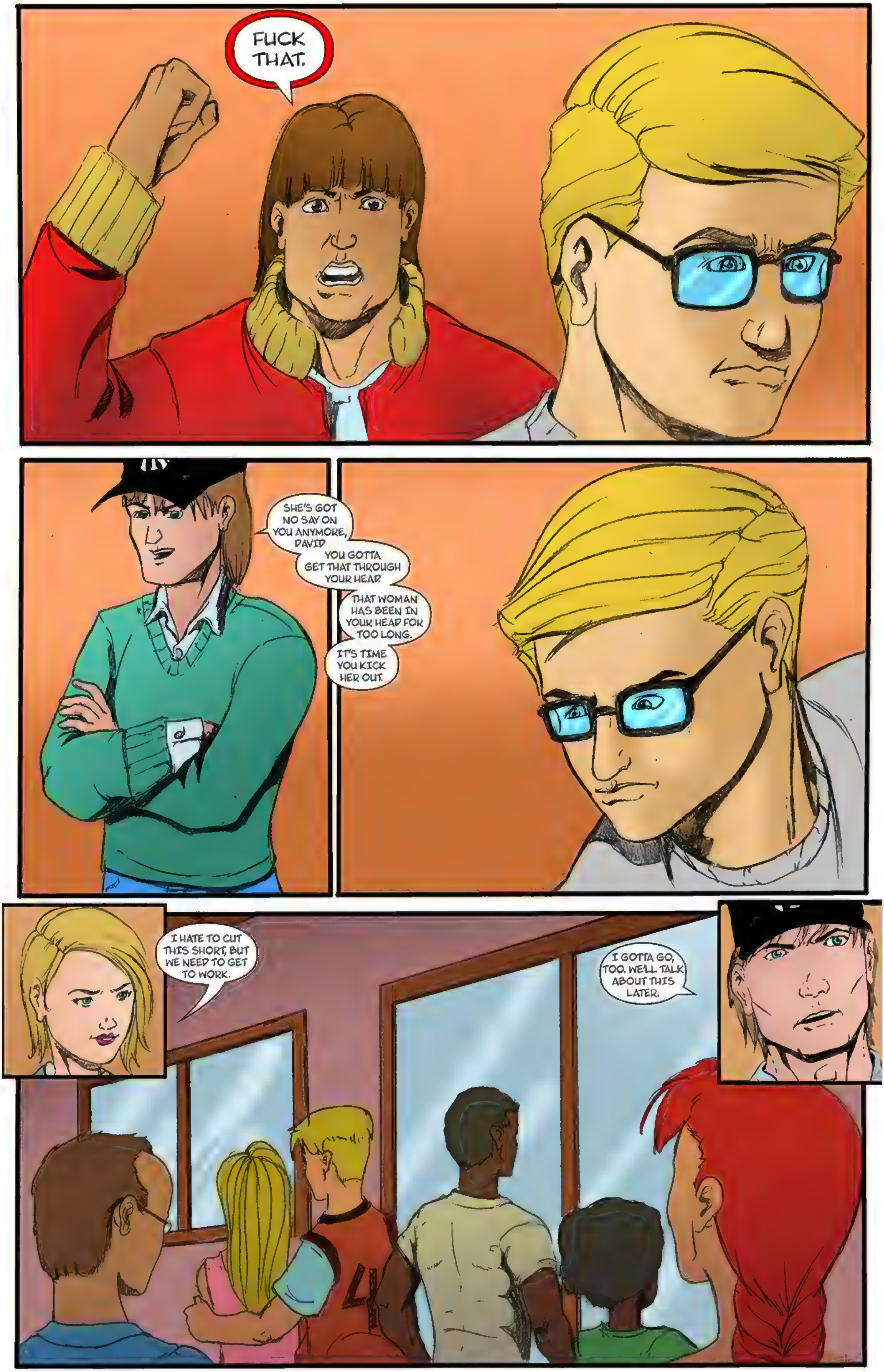

YOU AND HIS FATHER WERE ALWAYS BAD INFLUENCES.
BECAUSE, HE...
AND HE CERTAINLY DOESN'T NEED TO LEARN ANYTHING FROM FAILURES LIKE YOU.
WHO ARE YOU CALLING A FAILURE?
THE WOMAN WHO'S WORKSHOP FAILED SO BADLY, SHE HAD TO FUCK HER WAY INTO OWNING A DINER.
YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT YOUR SON IS THE ONLY THING KEEPING ME FROM USING MY TOYS ON YOU.
ONLY GOES TO SHOW HOW MUCH POWER I HAVE OVER YOU.


I CAN STILL KICK YOU OUT AND CALL THE POLICE.
FINE. ENJOY YOUR LAST DAY WITH HIM.
ARE YOU GOING TO CASH ME OUT OR GAWK AT ME LIKE AN IDIOT?
SORRY...
NO WONDER YOU COULDN'T GET WORK ELSEWHERE. I DON'T SEE HOW YOU GOT THIS JOB.


HOW LONG WAS SHE HERE?
SINCE THIS MORNING. SHE JUST SAT AROUND WORKING.
DAMN, SHE'S PERSISTENT.
WELL, THAT EXPLAINED A FEW THINGS ABOUT YOU.
LOOK AT IT THIS WAY, MANUEL.
AT THE RATE THINGS ARE GOING, YOU MAY GET YOUR WISH...


FUCK THAT.
SHE'S GOT NO SAY ON YOU ANYMORE, DAVID
YOU GOTTA GET THAT THROUGH YOUR HEAD.
THAT WOMAN HAS BEEN IN YOUR HEAD FOR TOO LONG.
IT'S TIME YOU KICK HER OUT.
I HATE TO CUT THIS SHORT, BUT WE NEED TO GET TO WORK.
I GOTTA GO, TOO. WE'LL TALK ABOUT THIS LATER.

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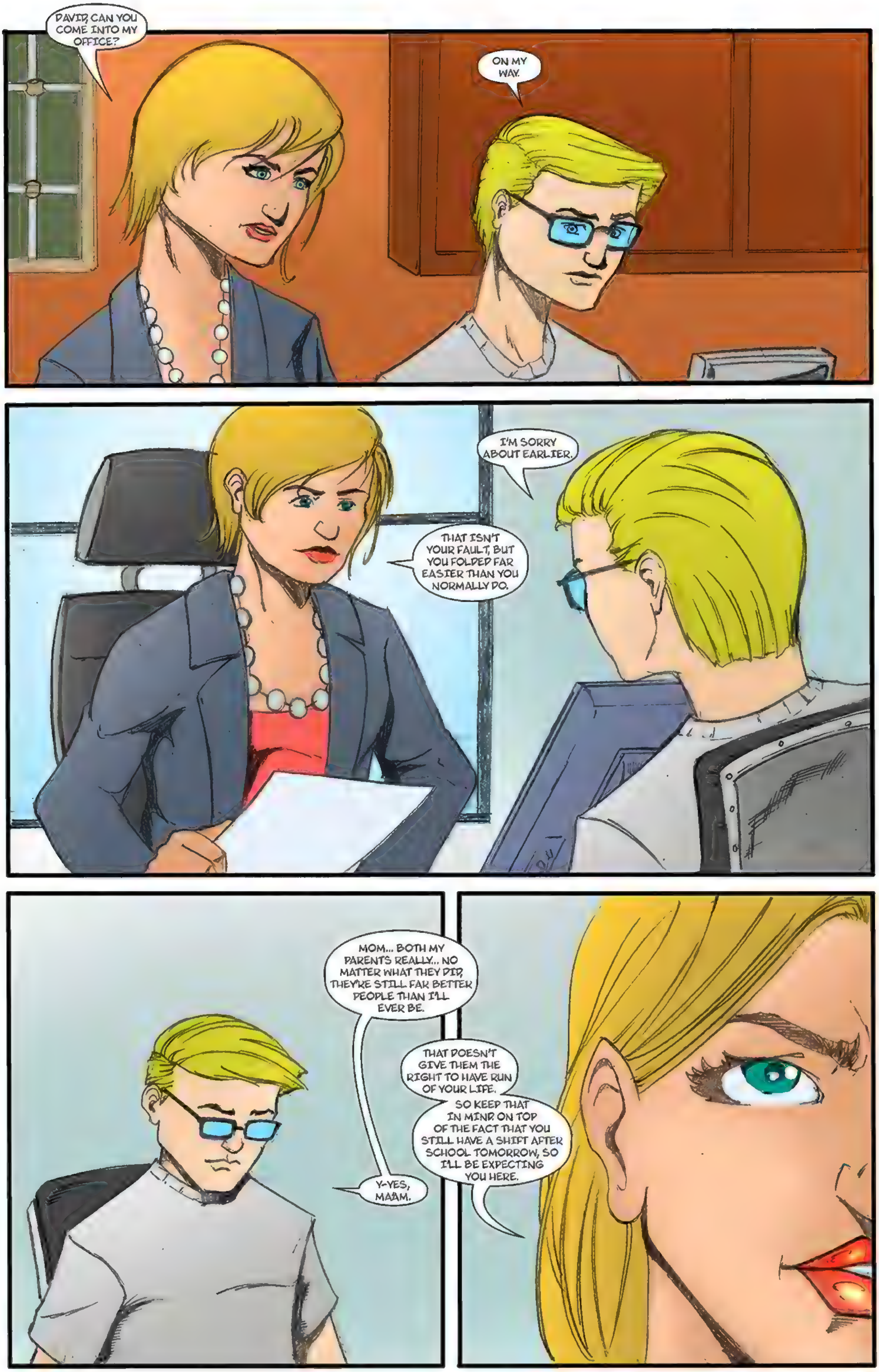

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HELLO
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING IS TECHNICALLY ILLEGAL, MARY.
I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING ILLEGAL. YOU'RE MY ATTORNEY, I KNOW YOU KNOW THIS.
YOUR DIVORCE PAPERS SAY...
THAT I CAN'T TAKE HIM AGAINST HIS WILL...
AND THOSE LAST THREE WORDS ARE CRITICAL.
I KNOW MY SON AND HOW TO GET HIM TO BEHAVE. I DON'T HAVE TO FORCE HIM TO DO ANYTHING.

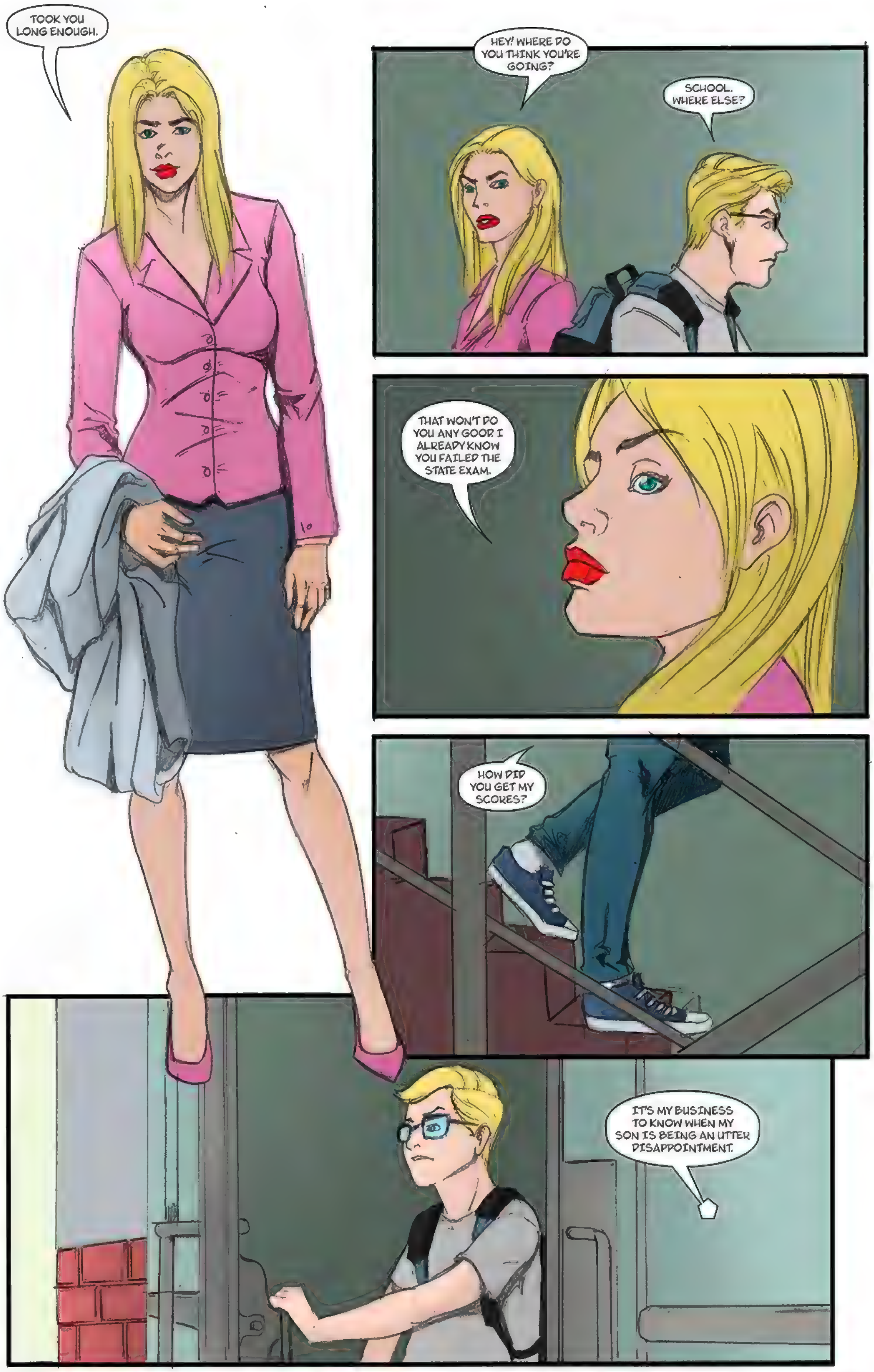
BIP
Microsoft
Speed dial
Dial pad
Voicemail
Voicemail
Tue 4:11 pm, Outgoing
Call using: SIM 1
AT LEAST, YOU HAVE THE DECENCY NOT TO BLOCK MY NUMBER.
I SHOULD REMIND YOU THAT THE LOGICAL CHOICE IS NOT ALWAYS THE RIGHT CHOICE. DURING THE DIVORCE, YOU MADE THE LOGICAL CHOICE...
NOW, YOU WILL MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE.

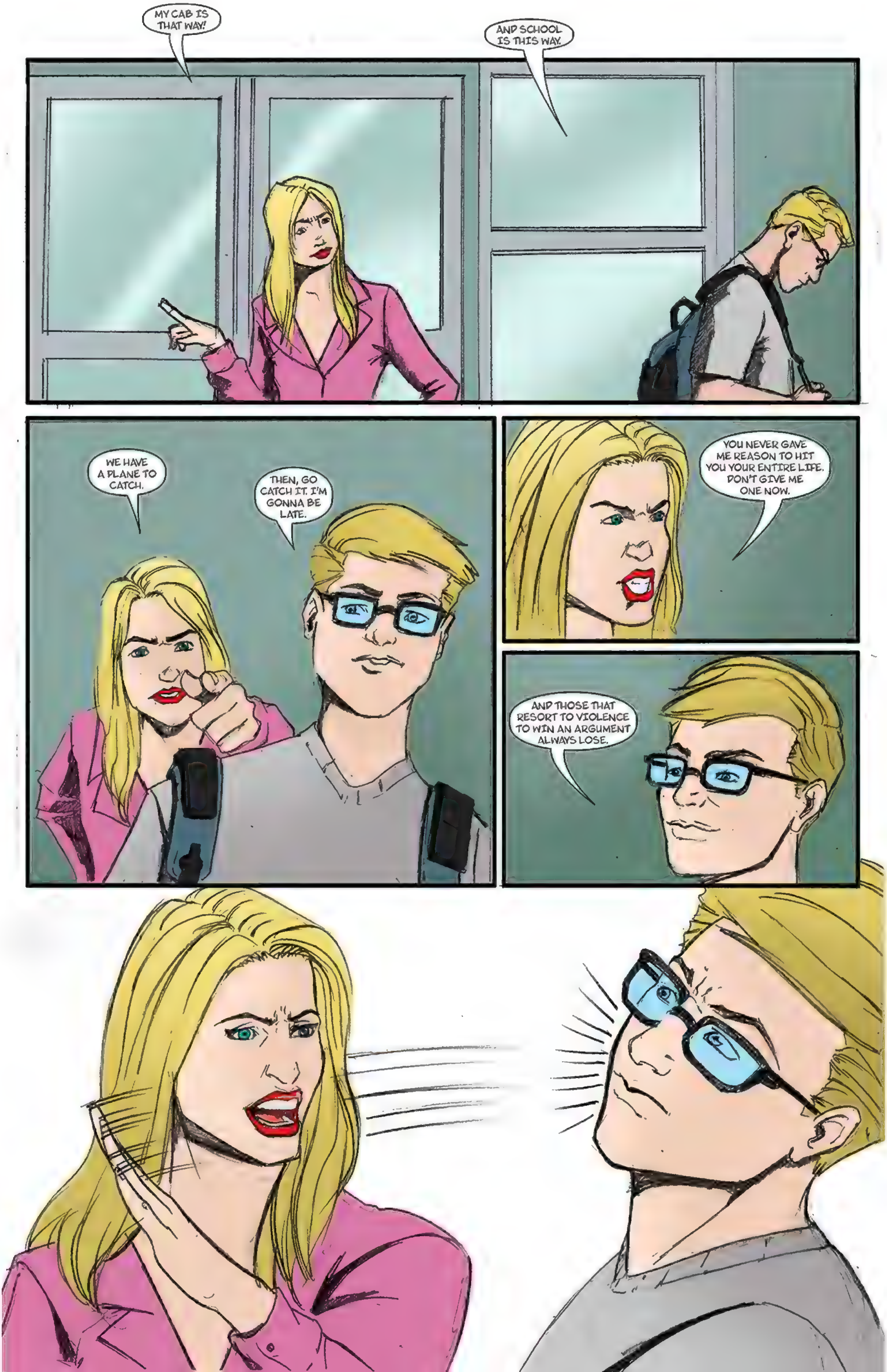
HI, DAVID. ARE YOU...?
I'M FINE.
LISTEN. YOU DON'T HAVE TO LISTEN TO YOUR MOTHER.
SO I'VE HEARD...
COME ON. DO YOU REALLY THINK SHE HAS LEGAL GROUND TO...
LIKE THAT'LL STOP HER.
OKAY, THAT'S IT. YOUR DAD WAS RIGHT. THIS IS YOUR FIGHT, AND I'M NOT GETTING INVOLVED ANYMORE.
I'M NOT HAPPY THAT YOU WOULD THROW AWAY THE PROGRESS YOU MADE JUST BECAUSE YOUR MOM SHOWED UP AND SAID SO.
ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, I'LL BE IN CALIFORNIA SOONER THAN EXPECTED.

I DON'T BLAME YOU FOR NOT WANTING TO BE AROUND EITHER, ECP.

TOLD YOU.
YEAH, YEAH. HOPE YOUR SATISFIED.
LIKE HELL I AM. YOU'RE THE ONE THROWING SHIT AWAY BECAUSE OF HER.
I THOUGHT YOU WANTED ME TO BE THE PERFECT LITTLE SON.
I WANT YOU TO STAY DISCIPLINED A HELL OF A LOT MORE THAN YOU'VE BEEN.
THEN, WOULDN'T YOU WIN?
AT WHAT COST?

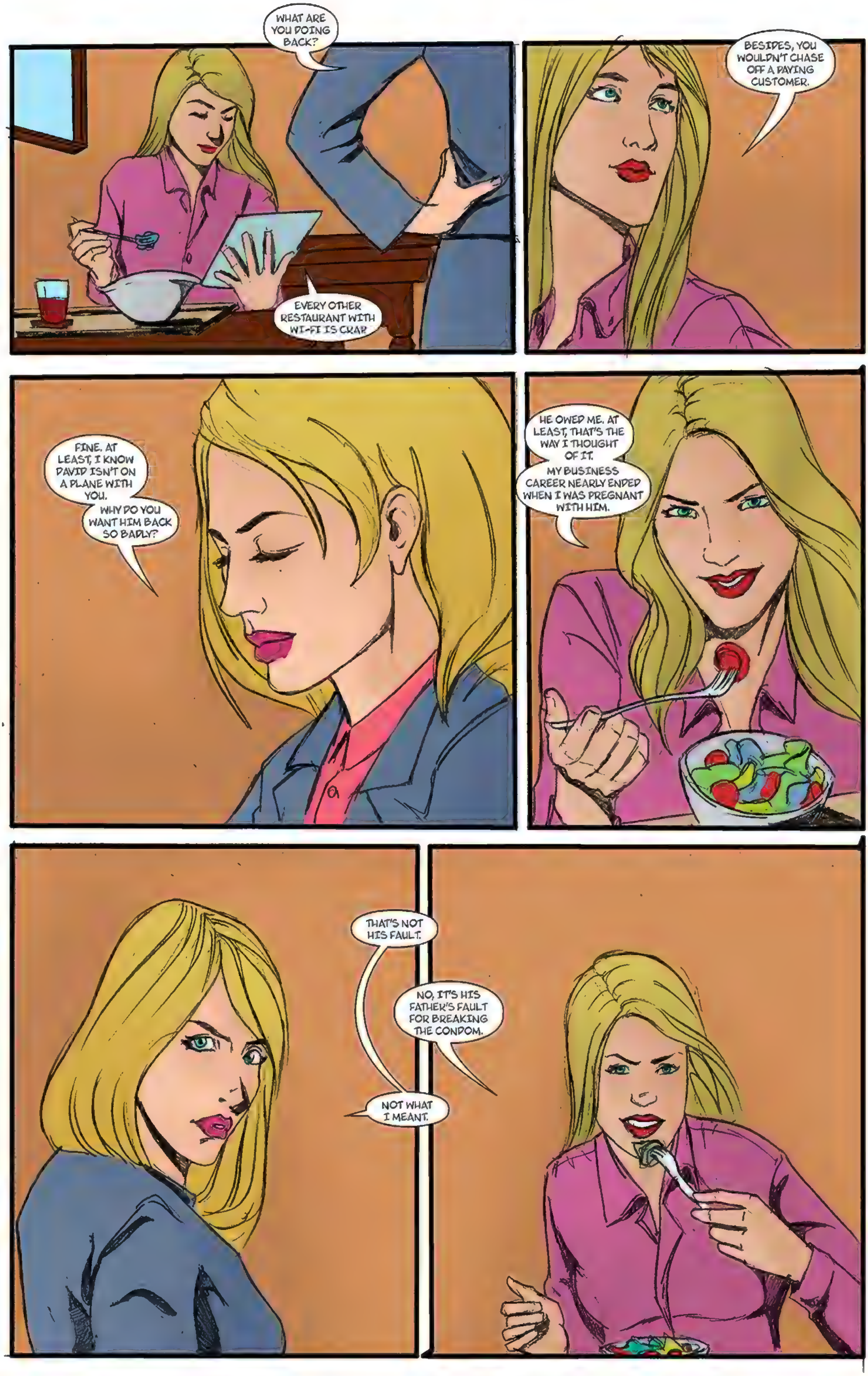
KYLE'S ALREADY GONE...

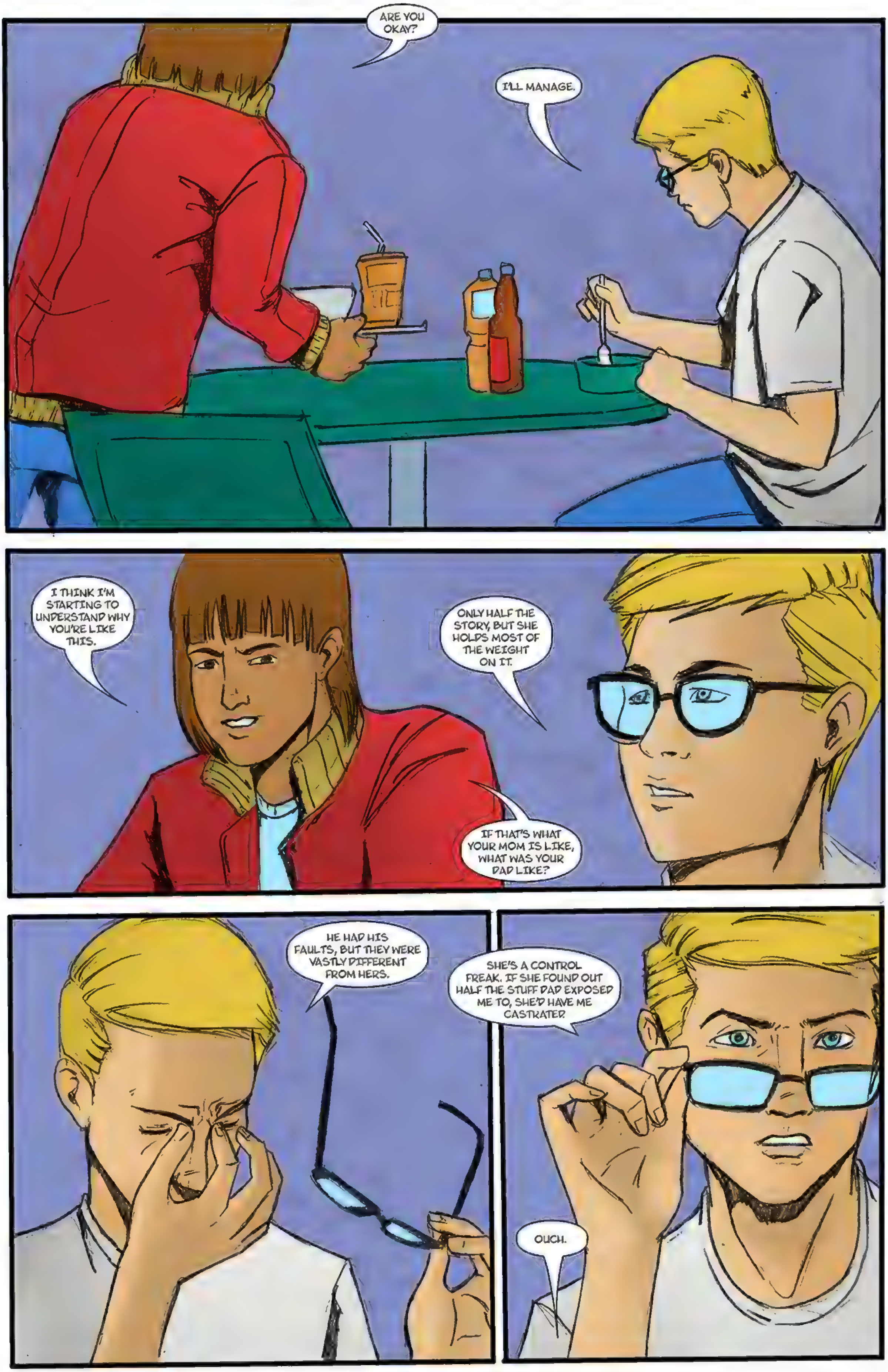

TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH.
HEY! WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?
SCHOOL. WHERE ELSE?
THAT WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD. I ALREADY KNOW YOU FAILED THE STATE EXAM.
HOW DID YOU GET MY SCORES?
IT'S MY BUSINESS TO KNOW WHEN MY SON IS BEING AN UTTER DISAPPOINTMENT.


MY CAB IS THAT WAY!
AND SCHOOL IS THIS WAY.
WE HAVE A PLANE TO CATCH.
THEN, GO CATCH IT. I'M GONNA BE LATE.
YOU NEVER GAVE ME REASON TO HIT YOU YOUR ENTIRE LIFE. DON'T GIVE ME ONE NOW.
AND THOSE THAT RESORT TO VIOLENCE TO WIN AN ARGUMENT ALWAYS LOSE.

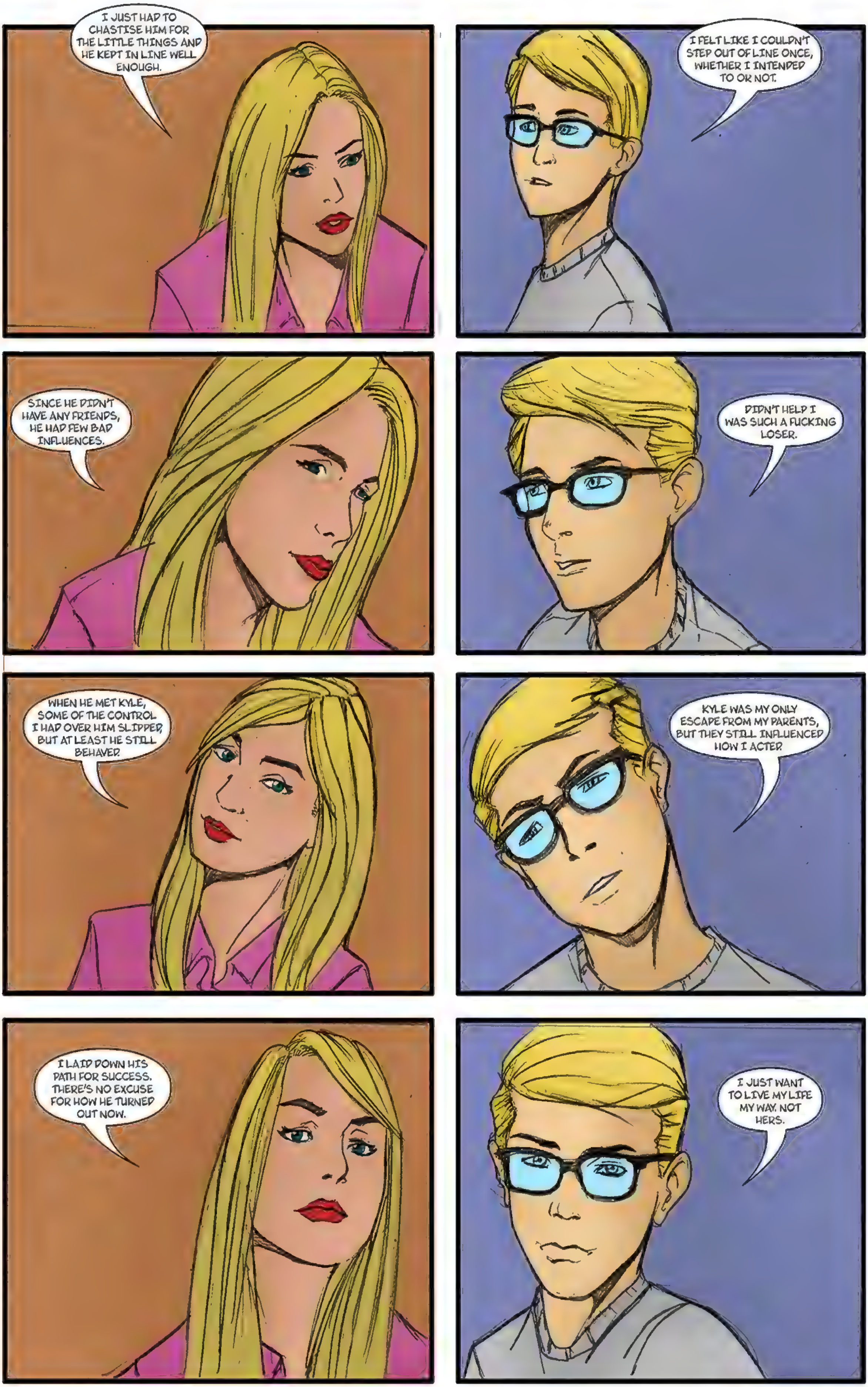
HUH...THAT ACTUALLY STUNG...
DON'T YOU DARE USE WHAT I TAUGHT YOU AGAINST ME.
DON'T FORGET I'M STILL THE PARENT. WHAT I SAY GOES.
YOU LOST THAT RIGHT WHEN YOU AND DAD BROKE INTO FISTICUFFS IN COURT OVER ME.
I DON'T SEE WHY YOU'RE OBSESSED WITH ME ANYWAY. DIDN'T YOU TELL DAD THAT MY BIRTH NEARLY RUINED YOUR LIFE?
WHEN DID YOU HEAR THAT?
THROUGHOUT MY DAMNED CHILDHOOD. YOU ROSE ME TO BE EXTREMELY OBSERVANT.

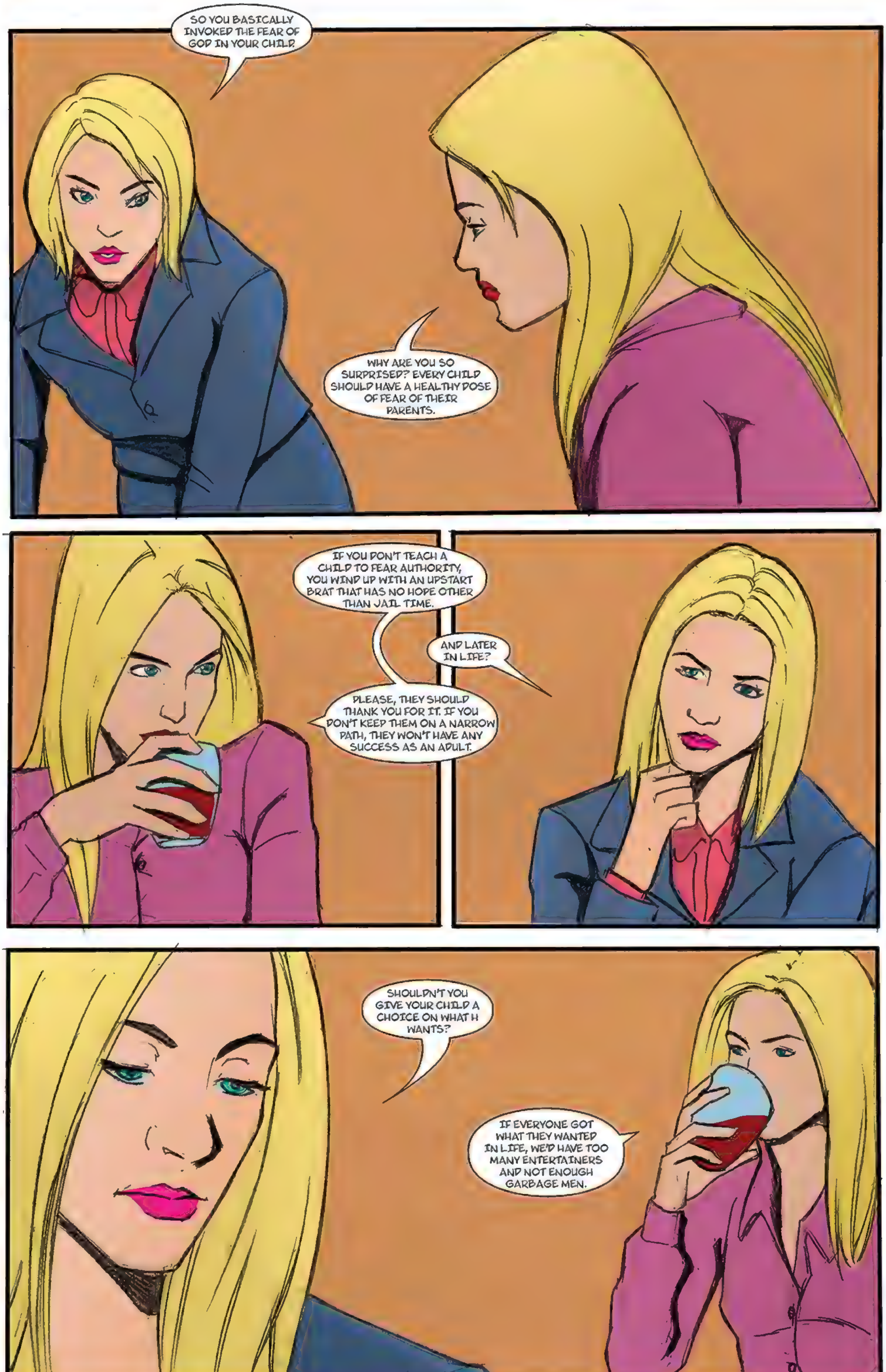
OF COURSE, SHE WOULD MAKE ME LATE.
MR. RAMSEY? YOU'RE NEVER LATE.
MY MOM DECIDED TO MAKE A SURPRISE APPEARANCE YESTERDAY AND TRIED TO TAKE ME HOME WITH HER THIS MORNING... FOR GOOD.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT GOOD IT'LL DO, BUT IF SHE SHOWS UP AND TRIES TO PULL ME FROM CLASS, DON'T LET HER.
I DON'T THINK I CAN PREVENT A PARENT FROM DOING THAT.
CHECK MY RECORDS. IT SHOULD STATE MY ROOMMATE, KYLE STILES, AS MY LEGAL GUARDIAN. HE'S THE ONLY ONE WITH THAT RIGHT.


WHAT ARE YOU DOING BACK?
EVERY OTHER RESTAURANT WITH WI-FI IS CRAP.
BESIDES, YOU WOULDN'T CHASE OFF A PAYING CUSTOMER.
FINE. AT LEAST, I KNOW DAVID ISN'T ON A PLANE WITH YOU.
WHY DO YOU WANT HIM BACK SO BADLY?
HE OWED ME. AT LEAST, THAT'S THE WAY I THOUGHT OF IT.
MY BUSINESS CAREER NEARLY ENDED WHEN I WAS PREGNANT WITH HIM.
THAT'S NOT HIS FAULT.
NO, IT'S HIS FATHER'S FAULT FOR BREAKING THE CONDOM.
NOT WHAT I MEANT.


ARE YOU OKAY?
I'LL MANAGE.
I THINK I'M STARTING TO UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'RE LIKE THIS.
ONLY HALF THE STORY, BUT SHE HOLDS MOST OF THE WEIGHT ON IT.
IF THAT'S WHAT YOUR MOM IS LIKE, WHAT WAS YOUR DAD LIKE?
HE HAD HIS FAULTS, BUT THEY WERE VASTLY DIFFERENT FROM HERS.
SHE'S A CONTROL FREAK. IF SHE FOUND OUT HALF THE STUFF DAD EXPOSED ME TO, SHE'D HAVE ME CASTRATED.
OUCH.

I'M PRETTY SURE RAISING DAVID DIDN'T HELP.
RAISING DAVID WAS... DIFFERENT THAN I EXPECTED.
THE THING IS, I WAS A CAREER WOMAN, NOT A MOTHER.
I HALF-EXPECTED HIM TO BE A BRAT GROWING UP, BUT IT DIDN'T LAST AS LONG AS I EXPECTED.
YOU'D THINK THAT WAS A BLESSING.
HE WAS JUST AWARE, EVEN AS A YOUNG CHILD. BY 3, HE WAS RECOGNIZING WHEN EITHER ME OR MY EX WERE ANGRY OR TIRED.
HE WAS READING BY AGE 4. I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH HE UNDERSTOOD, BUT IT WAS MORE THAN HE SHOULD HAVE.
IT DIDN'T HELP THAT MY EX AND I WANTED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE THIS IN DIFFERENT WAYS.
HOW COULD YOU TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THAT?
FOR ONE, I DIDN'T HAVE TO SPANK HIM TO KEEP HIM DISCIPLINED.


I JUST HAD TO CHASTISE HIM FOR THE LITTLE THINGS AND HE KEPT IN LINE WELL ENOUGH.
I FELT LIKE I COULDN'T STEP OUT OF LINE ONCE, WHETHER I INTENDED TO OR NOT.
SINCE HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY FRIENDS, HE HAD FEW BAD INFLUENCES.
DIDN'T HELP I WAS SUCH A FUCKING LOSER.
WHEN HE MET KYLE, SOME OF THE CONTROL I HAD OVER HIM SLIPPED, BUT AT LEAST HE STILL BEHAVED.
KYLE WAS MY ONLY ESCAPE FROM MY PARENTS, BUT THEY STILL INFLUENCED HOW I ACTED.
I LAID DOWN HIS PATH FOR SUCCESS. THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR HOW HE TURNED OUT NOW.
I JUST WANT TO LIVE MY LIFE MY WAY. NOT HERS.



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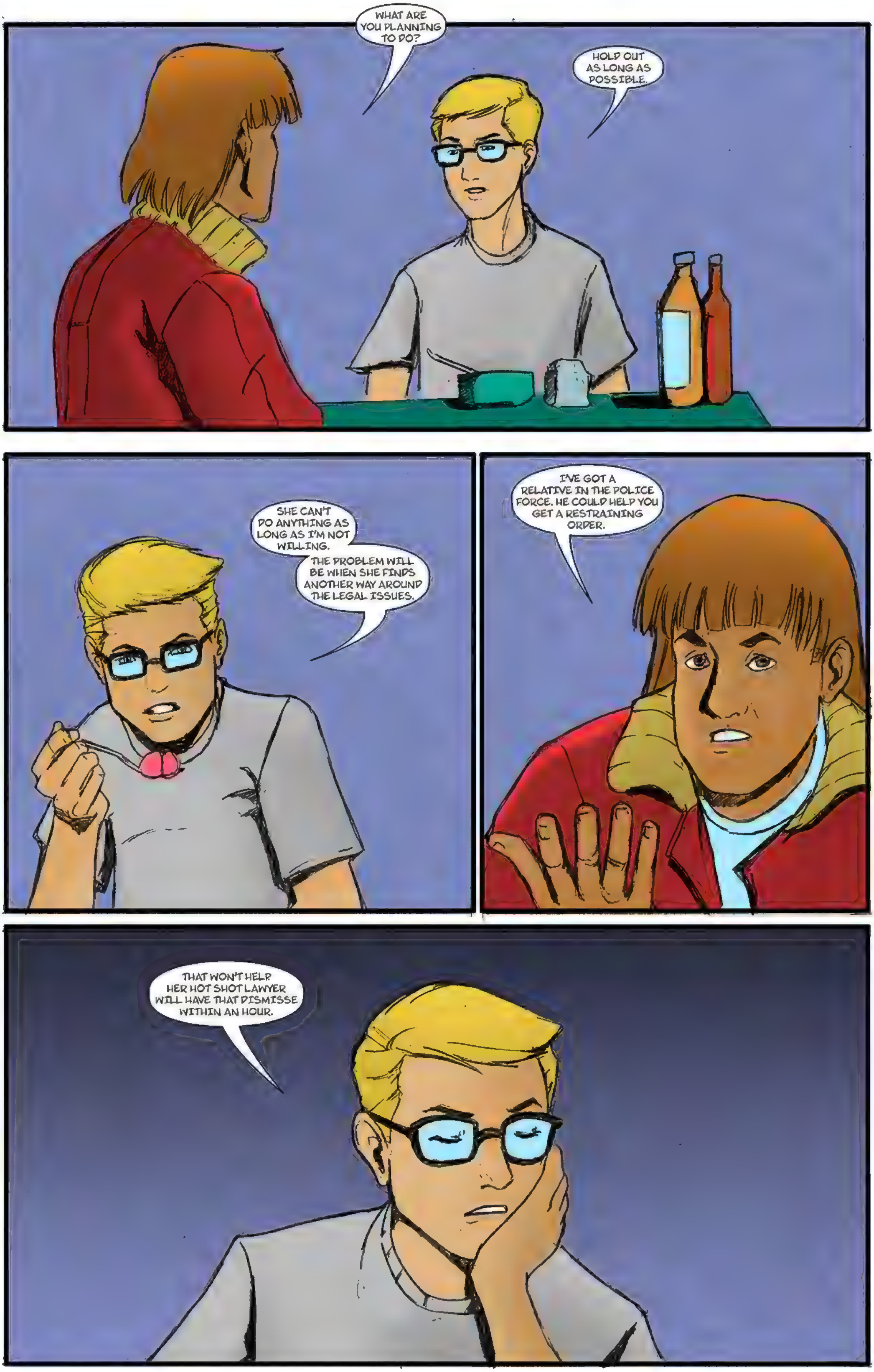
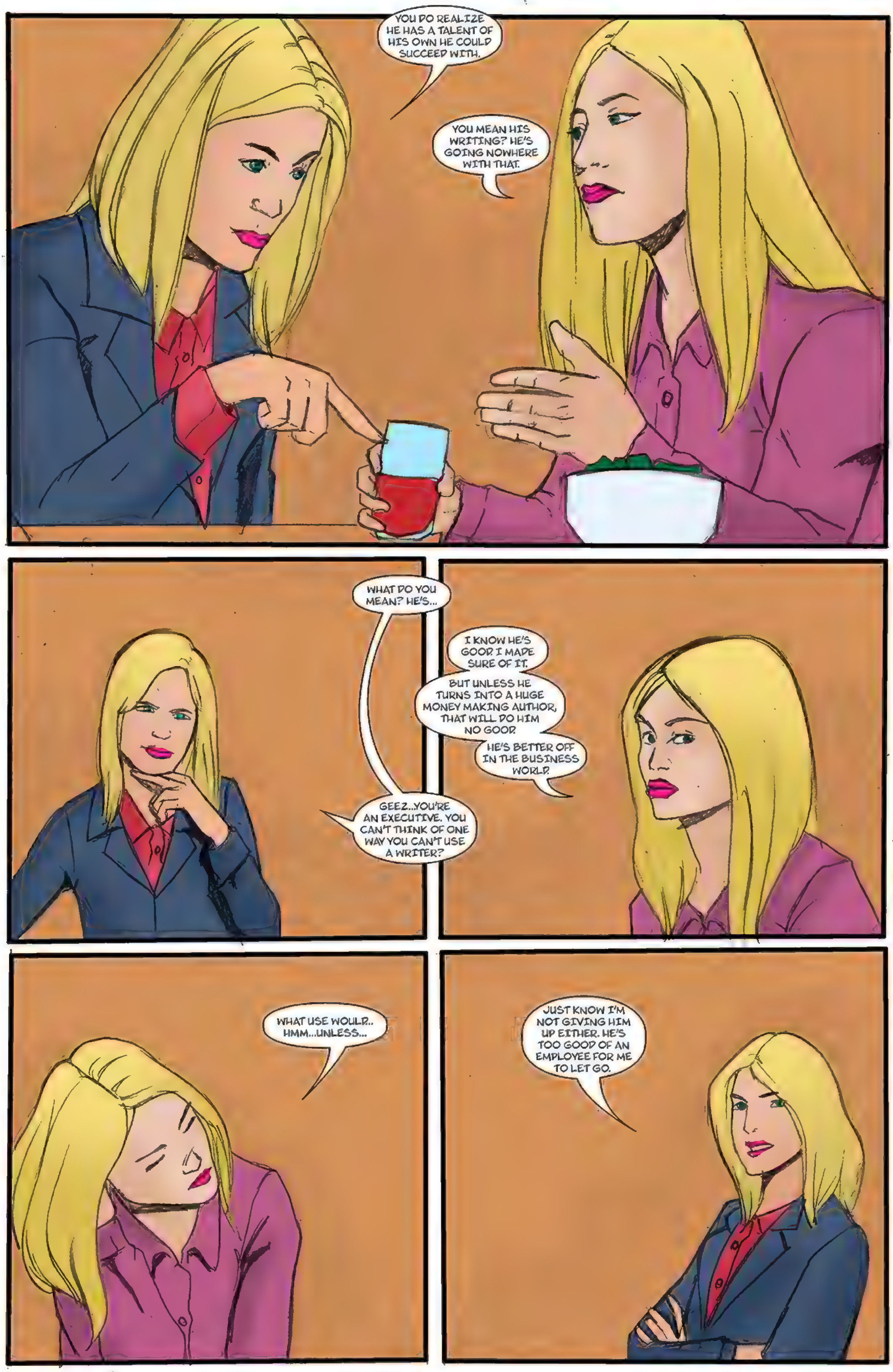

WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO?
HOLD OUT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.
SHE CAN'T DO ANYTHING AS LONG AS I'M NOT WILLING.
THE PROBLEM WILL BE WHEN SHE FINDS ANOTHER WAY AROUND THE LEGAL ISSUES.
I'VE GOT A RELATIVE IN THE POLICE FORCE. HE COULD HELP YOU GET A RESTRAINING ORDER.
THAT WON'T HELP. HER HOT SHOT LAWYER WILL HAVE THAT DISMISSE WITHIN AN HOUR.



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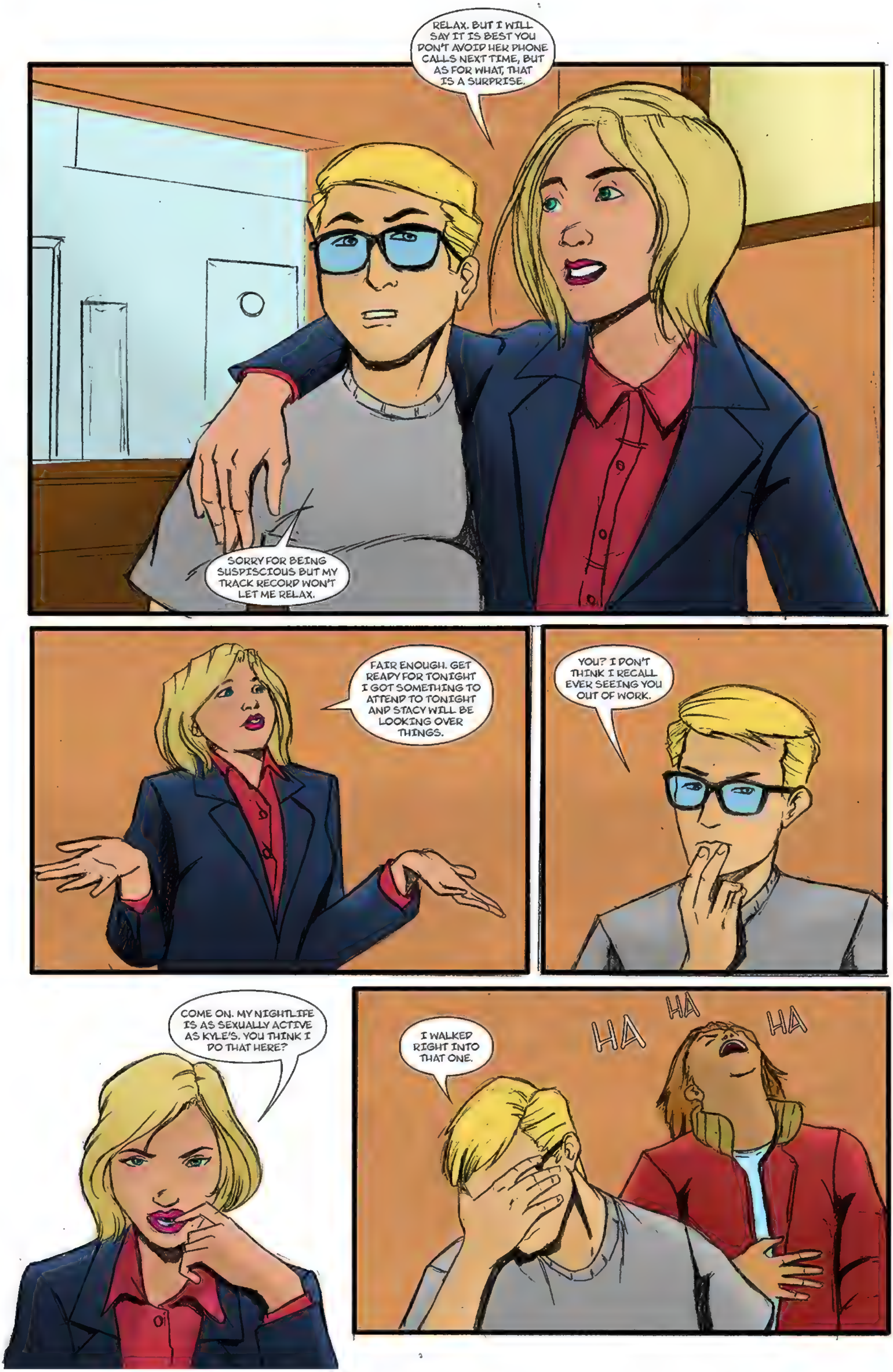
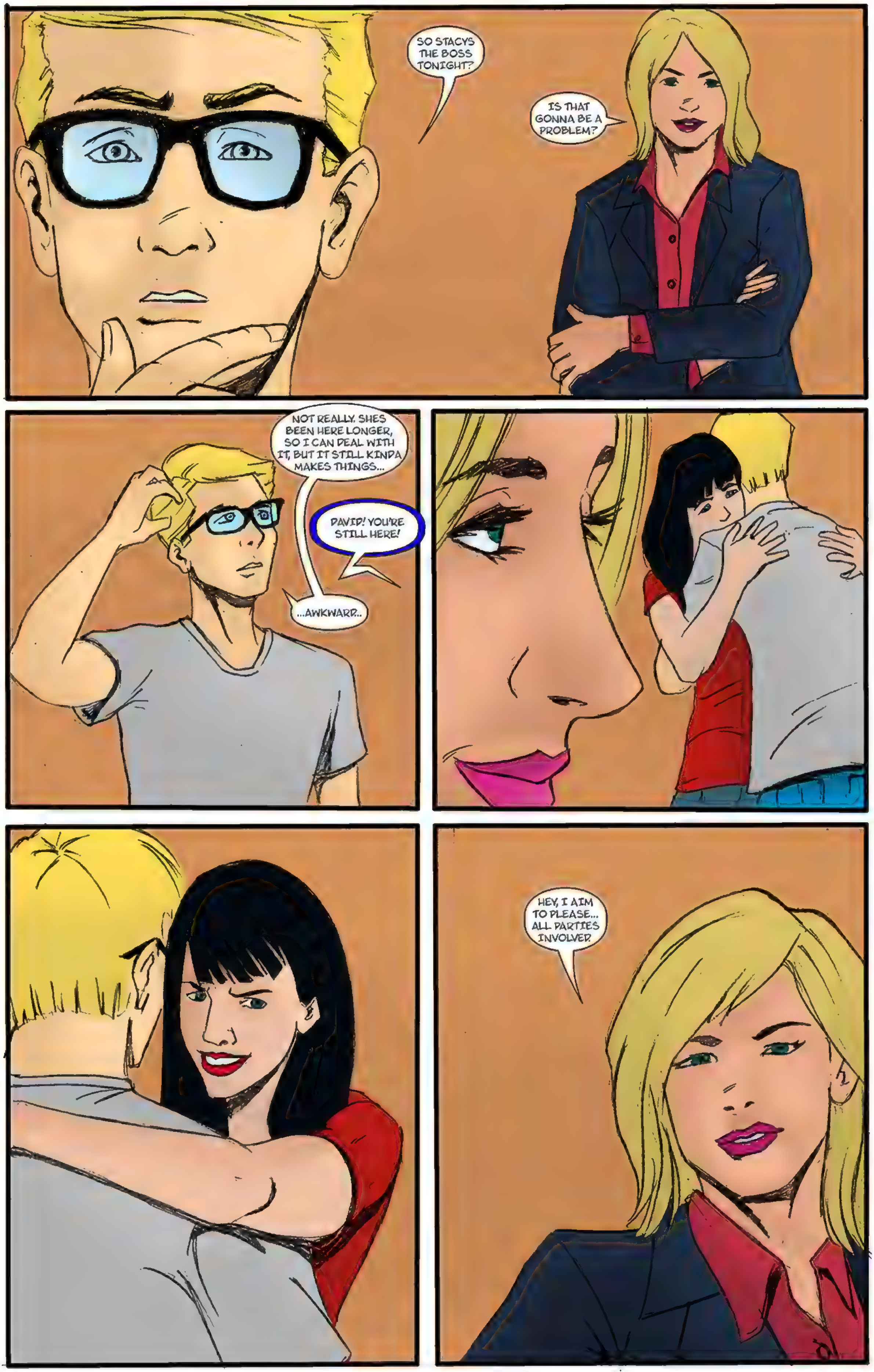

RELAX. BUT I WILL SAY IT IS BEST YOU DON'T AVOID HER PHONE CALLS NEXT TIME, BUT AS FOR WHAT, THAT IS A SURPRISE.
SORRY FOR BEING SUSPISCIOUS BUT MY TRACK RECORD WON'T LET ME RELAX.
FAIR ENOUGH. GET READY FOR TONIGHT I GOT SOMETHING TO ATTEND TO TONIGHT AND STACY WILL BE LOOKING OVER THINGS.
YOU? I DON'T THINK I RECALL EVER SEEING YOU OUT OF WORK.
COME ON. MY NIGHTLIFE IS AS SEXUALLY ACTIVE AS KYLE'S. YOU THINK I DO THAT HERE?
I WALKED RIGHT INTO THAT ONE.
HA HA HA



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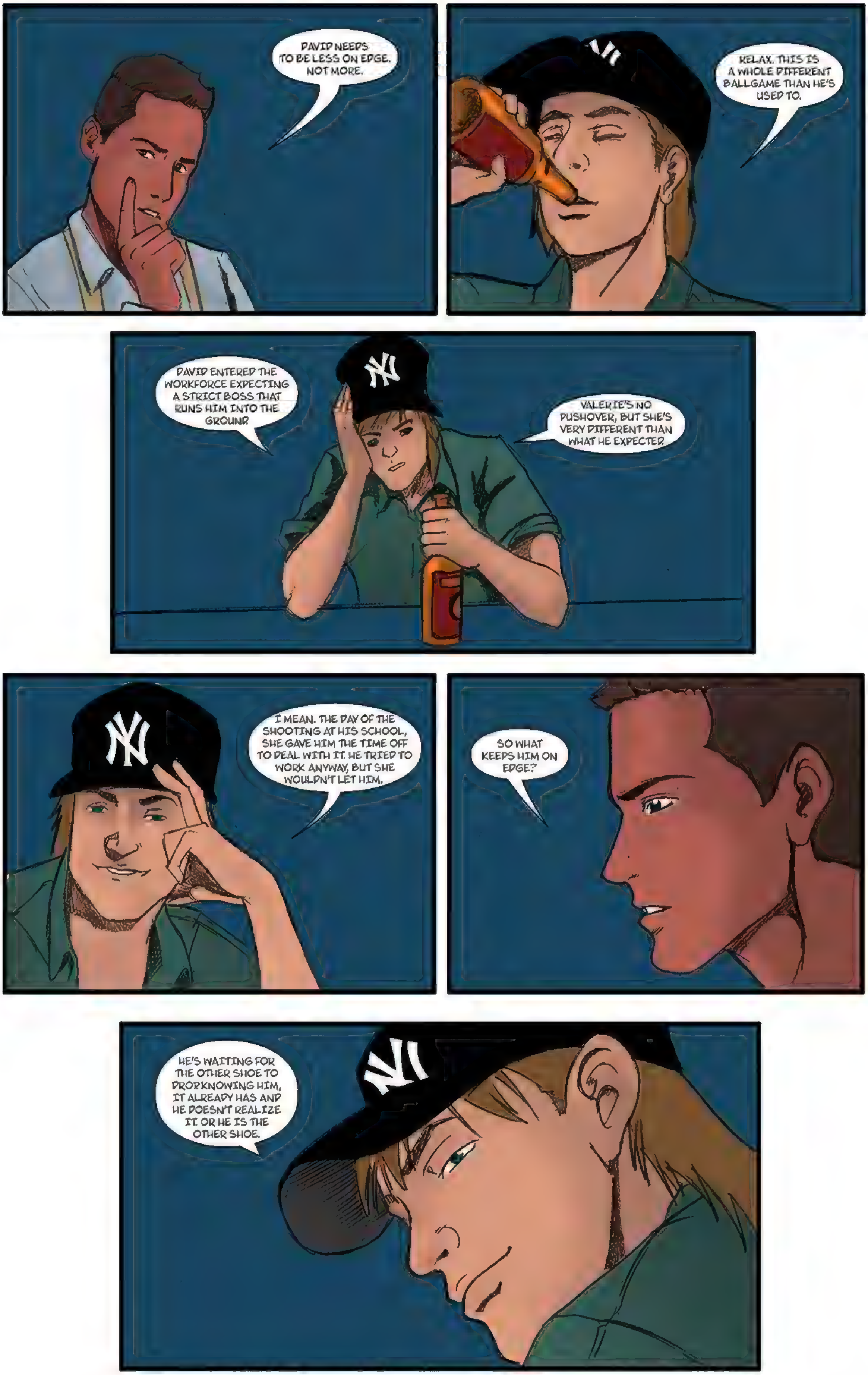
YOU GOTTA CONVINCE HIM TO BRING HER BY SOMETIME. HOW OLD IS SHE?
I CAN TELL YOU SHE'S OVER 18, BUT I DON'T THINK SHE'S DRINKING AGE.
REALLY? HOW DID HE MANAGE THAT?
SHE'S A CO-WORKER OF HIS...AT VAL'S DINER.
VALERIE'S? WELL, THAT EXPLAINS EVERYTHING.
TELL ME ABOUT IT. SHE'S BEEN GOOD FOR HIM, SO I'M NOT ARGUING.
SO HOW IS VALERIE TREATING HIM?
NOT BAD. KEEPS HIM A BIT ON EDGE BUT FOR VERY DIFFERENT REASONS THAN HE'S USED TO.



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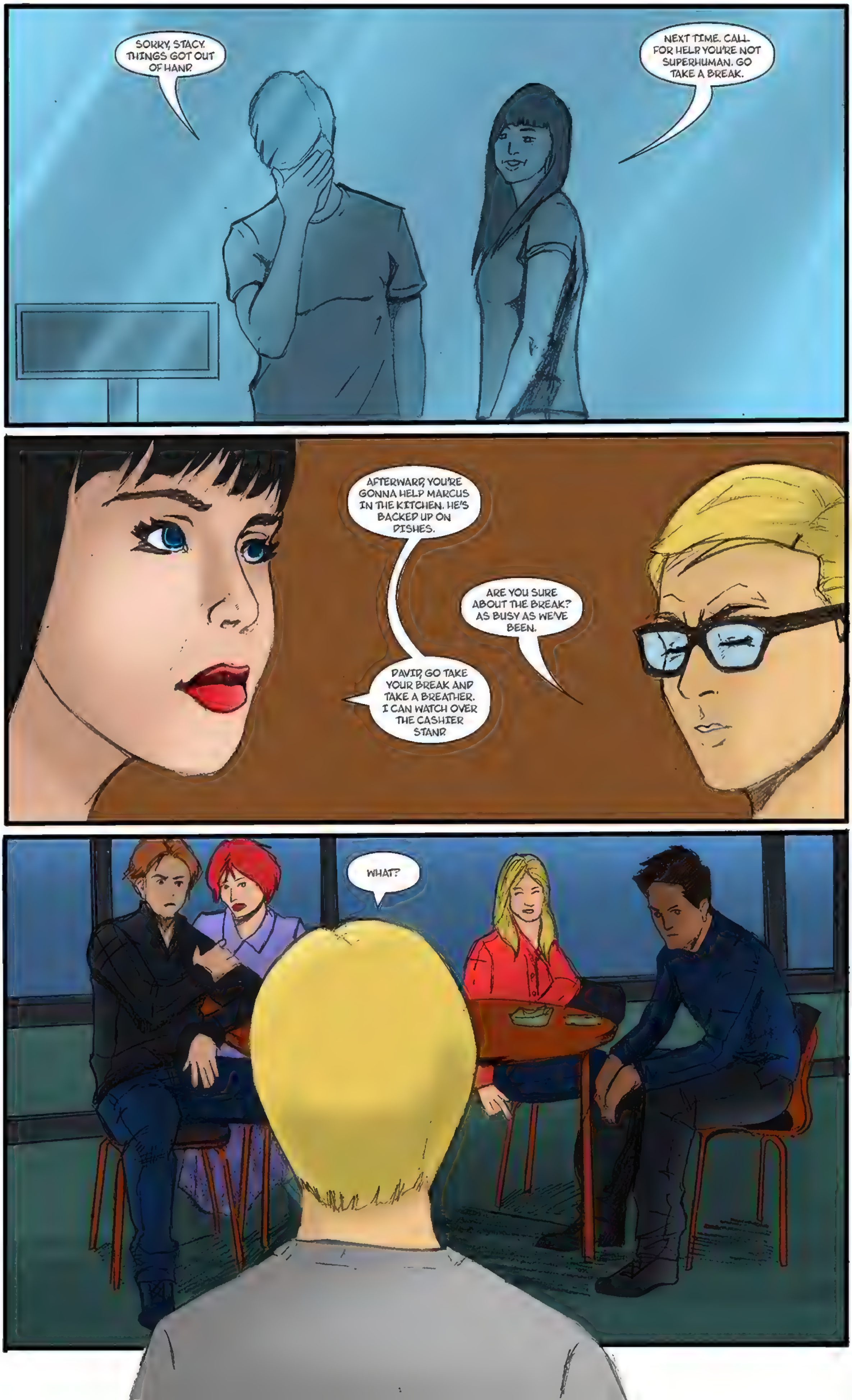
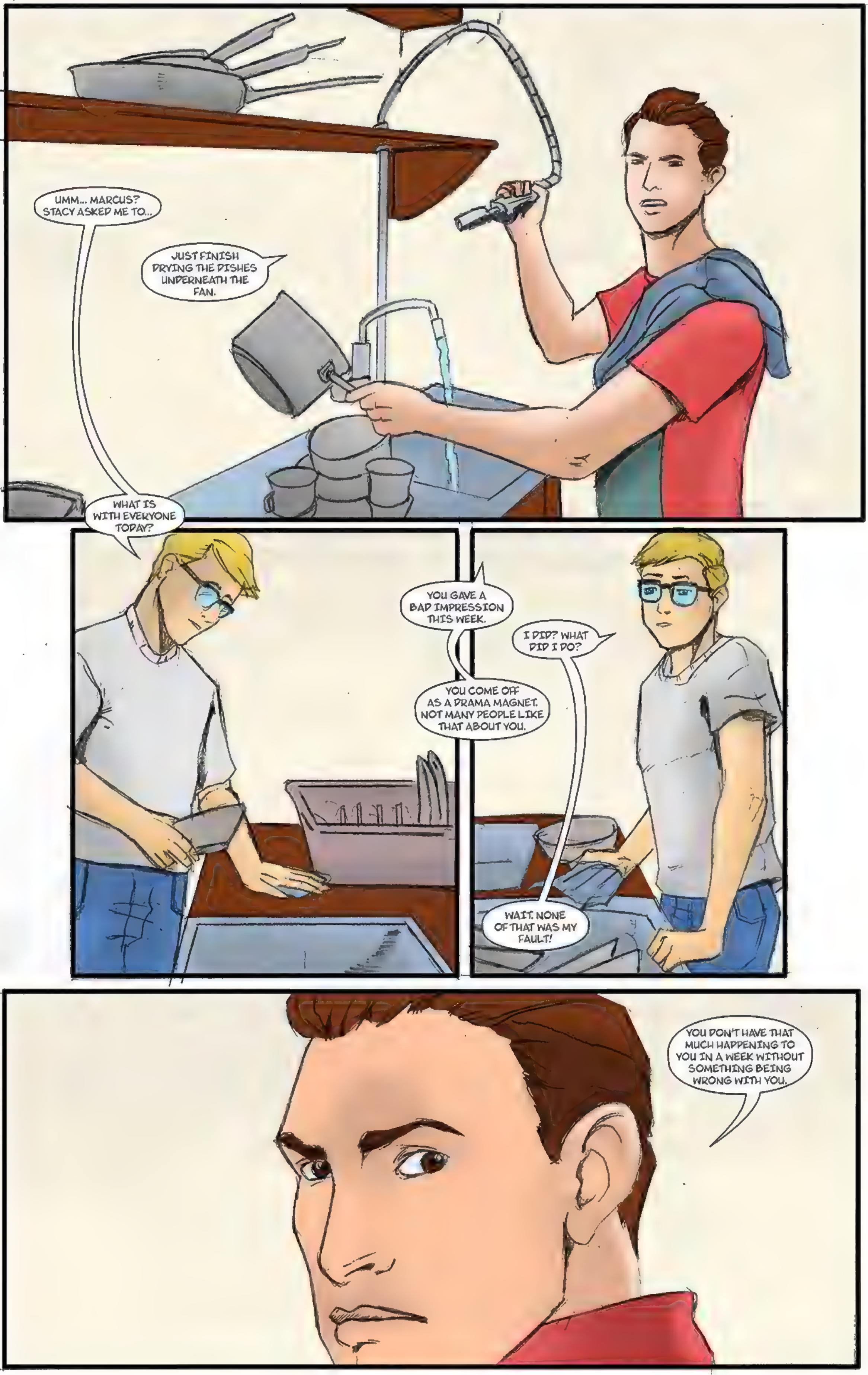
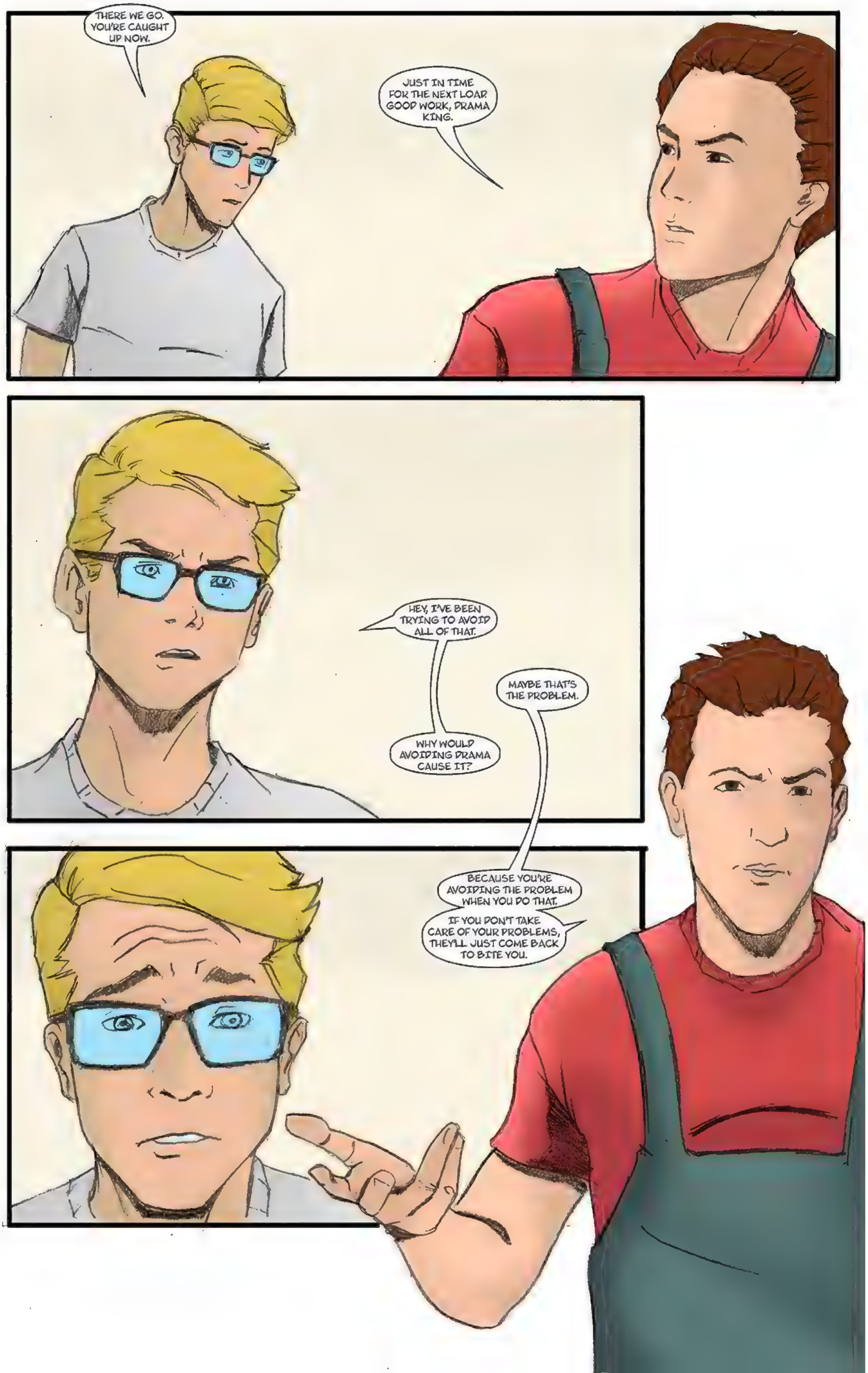
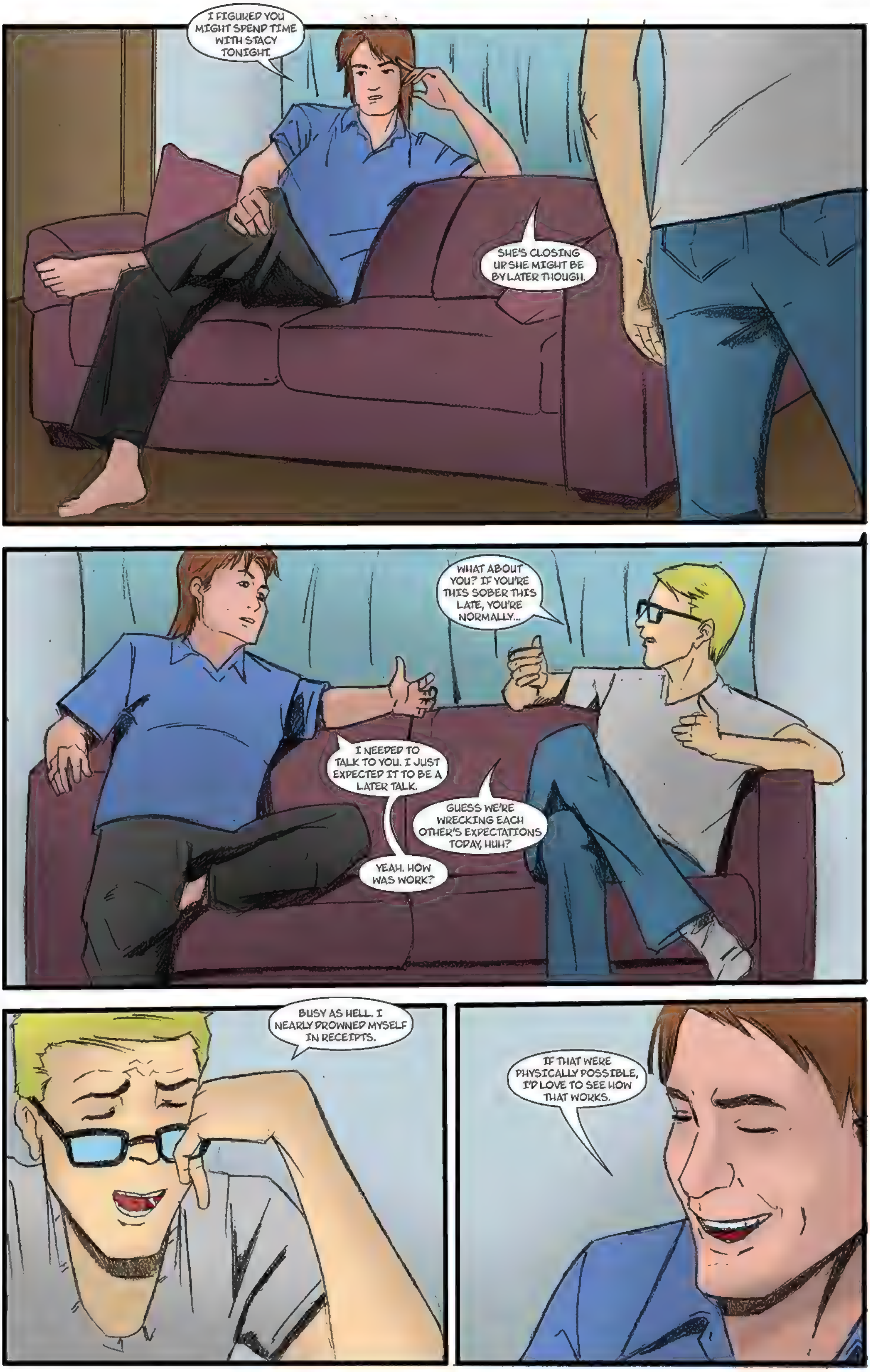
SO HOW IS HE ENJOYING THE WORK?
HE HASN'T SAID MUCH ABOUT IT.
HE'S HAD AN EVENTFUL WEEK, SO HE'S BEEN DISTRACTED BY OTHER THINGS.
SO TODAY IS HIS FIRST TIME WORKING A FRIDAY NIGHT?
YEP. HE'S PROBABLY HAVING THE TIME OF HIS LIFE RIGHT NOW...
YES, MA'AM I'LL HAVE YOUR RECEIPT READY.
AND SIR, LET ME REPEAT YOUR TO GO ORDER.
WAIT...
I MIXED ORDERS TOGETHER...AGAIN... NOW, I GOTTA START EVERYTHING OVER.

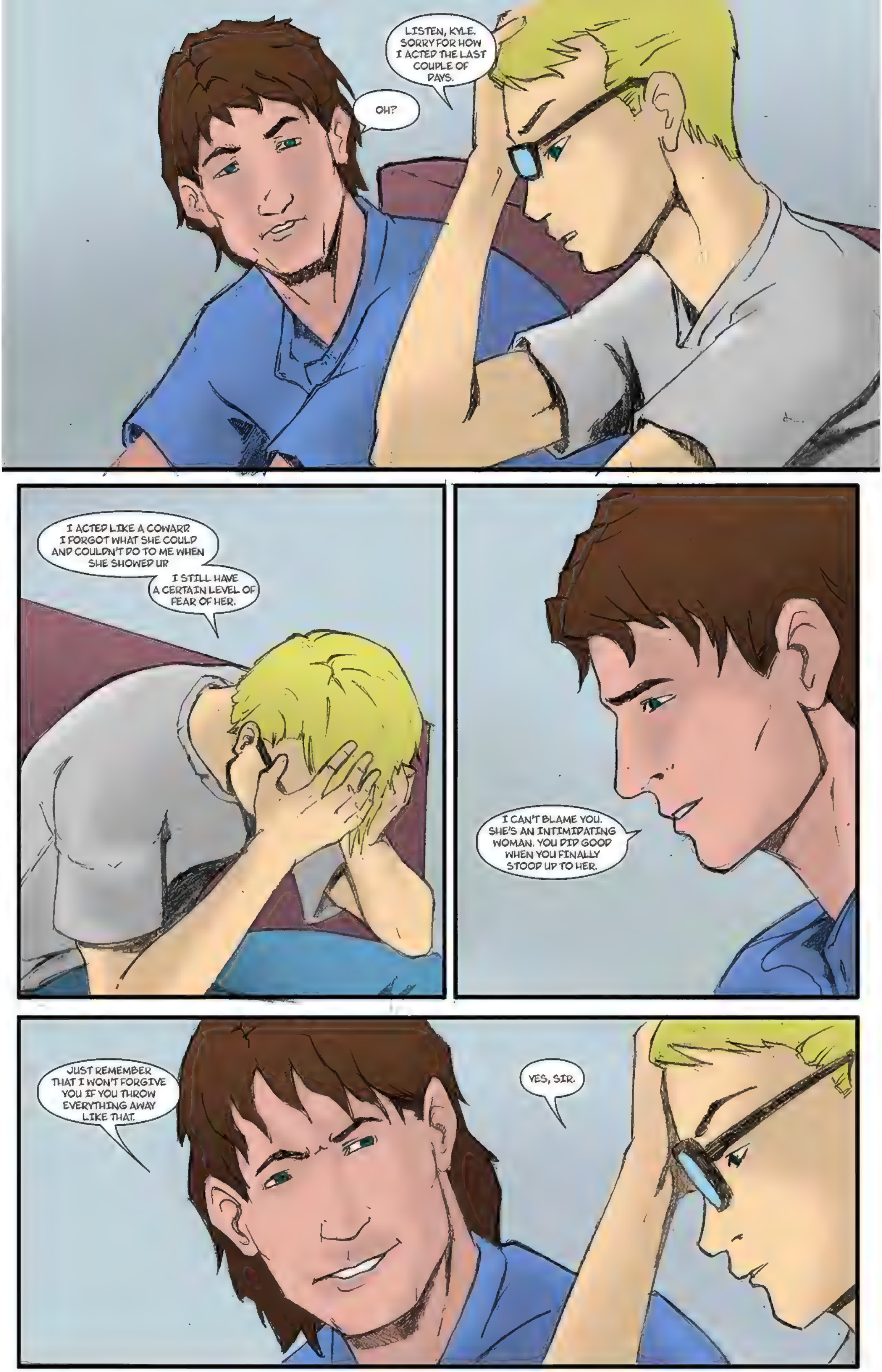

SORRY, STACY. THINGS GOT OUT OF HAND.
NEXT TIME, CALL FOR HELP. YOU'RE NOT SUPERHUMAN. GO TAKE A BREAK.
AFTERWARD, YOU'RE GONNA HELP MARCUS IN THE KITCHEN. HE'S BACKED UP ON DISHES.
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THE BREAK? AS BUSY AS WE'VE BEEN.
DAVID, GO TAKE YOUR BREAK AND TAKE A BREATHER. I CAN WATCH OVER THE CASHIER STAND.
WHAT?

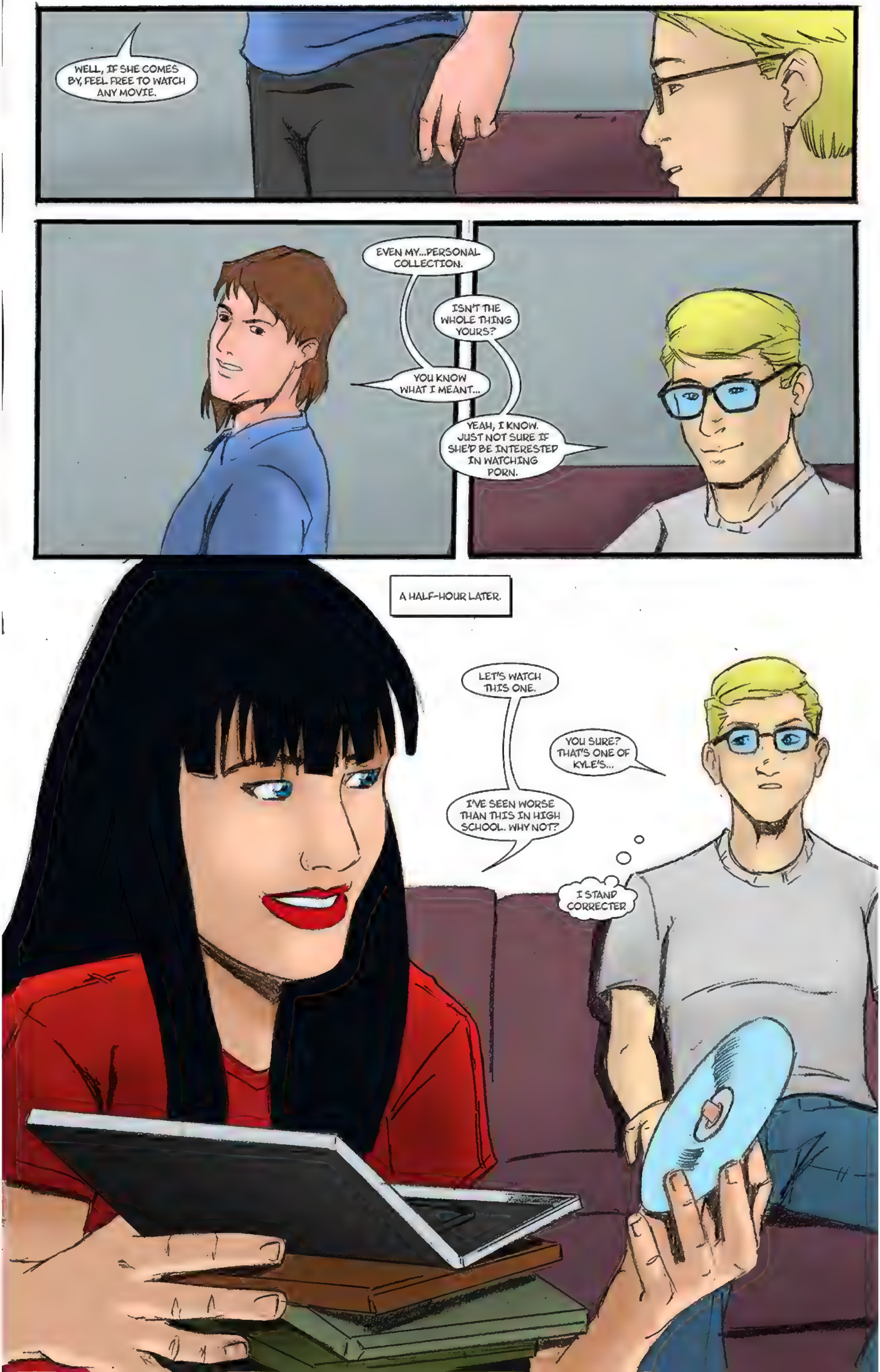

UMM... MARCUS? STACY ASKED ME TO...
JUST FINISH DRYING THE DISHES UNDERNEATH THE FAN.
WHAT IS WITH EVERYONE TODAY?
YOU GAVE A BAD IMPRESSION THIS WEEK.
YOU COME OFF AS A DRAMA MAGNET. NOT MANY PEOPLE LIKE THAT ABOUT YOU.
I DID? WHAT DID I DO?
WAIT. NONE OF THAT WAS MY FAULT!
YOU DON'T HAVE THAT MUCH HAPPENING TO YOU IN A WEEK WITHOUT SOMETHING BEING WRONG WITH YOU.


THERE WE GO. YOU'RE CAUGHT UP NOW.
JUST IN TIME FOR THE NEXT LOAD. GOOD WORK, DRAMA KING.
HEY, I'VE BEEN TRYING TO AVOID ALL OF THAT.
MAYBE THAT'S THE PROBLEM.
WHY WOULD AVOIDING DRAMA CAUSE IT?
BECAUSE YOU'RE AVOIDING THE PROBLEM WHEN YOU DO THAT.
IF YOU DON'T TAKE CARE OF YOUR PROBLEMS, THEY'LL JUST COME BACK TO BITE YOU.

I BETTER GET BACK TO MY WORK.
HEY, BEFORE YOU GO. DON'T SWEAT WHAT PEOPLE AROUND HERE THINK OF YOU.
HUH?
YOU'RE NOT A BAD GUY. AND YOU CERTAINLY WORK HARD ENOUGH THAT PEOPLE WILL GET OVER IT.
JUST RELAX AND OPEN UP TO THE REST OF US ONCE IN A WHILE.
YOU HAVE A TENDENCY TO KEEP TO YOUR OWN SHELL.
SORRY IF I TOOK TOO LONG. MARCUS WAS JUST GIVING A FEW POINTERS.
AT LEAST, YOU'RE GETTING ALONG WITH THE OTHERS.
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.


I FIGURED YOU MIGHT SPEND TIME WITH STACY TONIGHT.
SHE'S CLOSING UP SHE MIGHT BE BY LATER THOUGH.
WHAT ABOUT YOU? IF YOU'RE THIS SOBER THIS LATE, YOU'RE NORMALLY...
I NEEDED TO TALK TO YOU. I JUST EXPECTED IT TO BE A LATER TALK.
GUESS WE'RE WRECKING EACH OTHER'S EXPECTATIONS TODAY, HUH?
YEAH. HOW WAS WORK?
BUSY AS HELL. I NEARLY DROWNED MYSELF IN RECEIPTS.
IF THAT WERE PHYSICALLY POSSIBLE, I'D LOVE TO SEE HOW THAT WORKS.

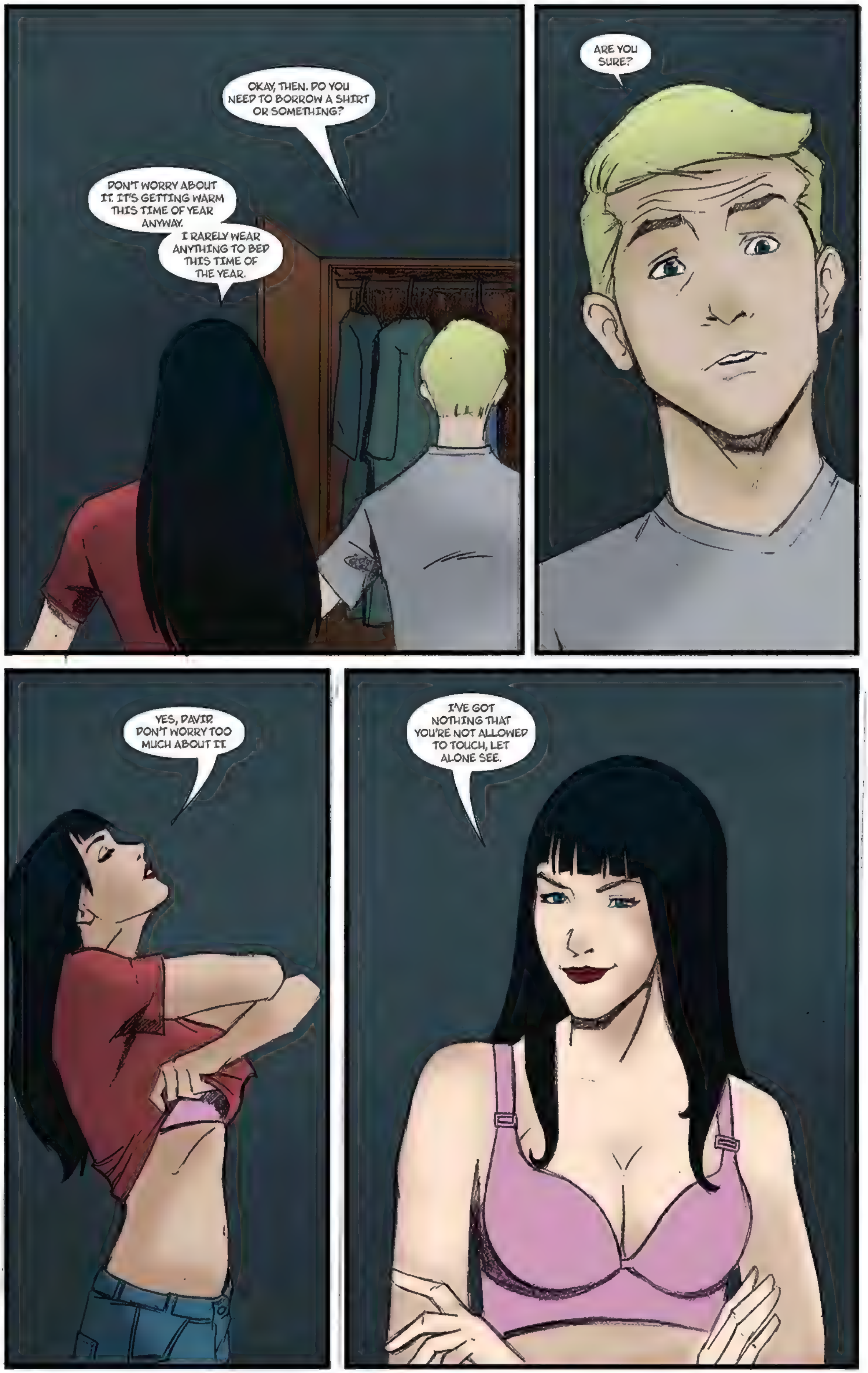

LISTEN, KYLE. SORRY FOR HOW I ACTED THE LAST COUPLE OF DAYS.
OH?
I ACTED LIKE A COWARD. I FORGOT WHAT SHE COULD AND COULDN'T DO TO ME WHEN SHE SHOWED UP.
I STILL HAVE A CERTAIN LEVEL OF FEAR OF HER.
I CAN'T BLAME YOU. SHE'S AN INTIMIDATING WOMAN. YOU DID GOOD WHEN YOU FINALLY STOOD UP TO HER.
JUST REMEMBER THAT I WON'T FORGIVE YOU IF YOU THROW EVERYTHING AWAY LIKE THAT.
YES, SIR.


WELL, IF SHE COMES BY, FEEL FREE TO WATCH ANY MOVIE.
EVEN MY...PERSONAL COLLECTION.
ISN'T THE WHOLE THING YOURS?
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEANT...
YEAH, I KNOW. JUST NOT SURE IF SHE'D BE INTERESTED IN WATCHING PORN.
A HALF-HOUR LATER.
LET'S WATCH THIS ONE.
YOU SURE? THAT'S ONE OF KYLE'S...
I'VE SEEN WORSE THAN THIS IN HIGH SCHOOL. WHY NOT?
I STAND CORRECTED.

WELL, THIS ISN'T BAD, BUT IT COULD'VE BEEN WRITTEN BETTER.
...
NO, DAVIR I KNOW HOW CLOSE THE POSSIBILITY OF...MIMICKING WHAT YOUR WATCHING IS. IT IS STILL A BAD I-...
OKAY, IT'S STARTING TO SEEM LIKE LESS OF A BAD IDEA...

MIND IF I SLEEP HERE TONIGHT?
HUH?
IT'S AFTER MIDNIGHT AND WE BOTH HAVE WORK IN THE MORNING.
OH, SURE!
IN FACT, YOU CAN SLEEP IN MY BED IF YOU WANT. I CAN SLEEP ON THE...
... COUCH?

GAH!
STACY, YOU KNOW YOU DON'T...
I'M NOT EXPECTING ANYTHING.
THIS IS YOUR ROOM, AND YOU SHOULDN'T GIVE UP ITS COMFORTS FOR ME.
I JUST WANT TO SHARE IT.


OKAY, THEN. DO YOU NEED TO BORROW A SHIRT OR SOMETHING?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. IT'S GETTING WARM THIS TIME OF YEAR ANYWAY.
I RARELY WEAR ANYTHING TO BED THIS TIME OF THE YEAR.
ARE YOU SURE?
YES, DAVID. DON'T WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT IT.
I'VE GOT NOTHING THAT YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO TOUCH, LET ALONE SEE.

I CAN'T ARGUE AGAINST THIS, BUT I'M STILL KINDA AROUSED.
AS BAD AS THAT MOVIE WAS, IT STILL DID ITS JOB.
GUIDE MY HAND AND I'LL HELP YOU.
HUH?
YOU'RE AWAKE?
IF YOU'RE AS HORNY AS I AM, IT'S HARD AS HELL TO SLEEP.

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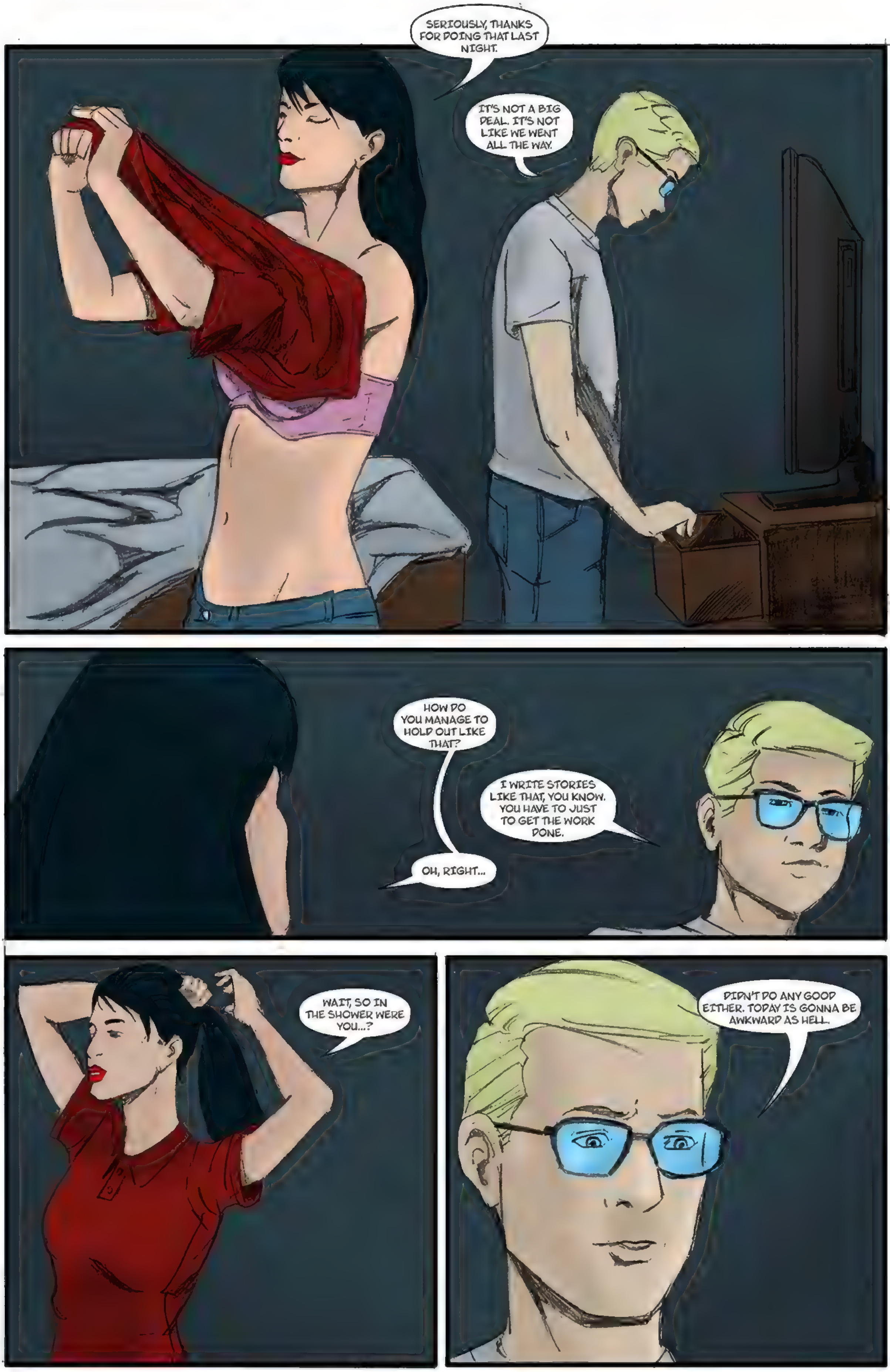
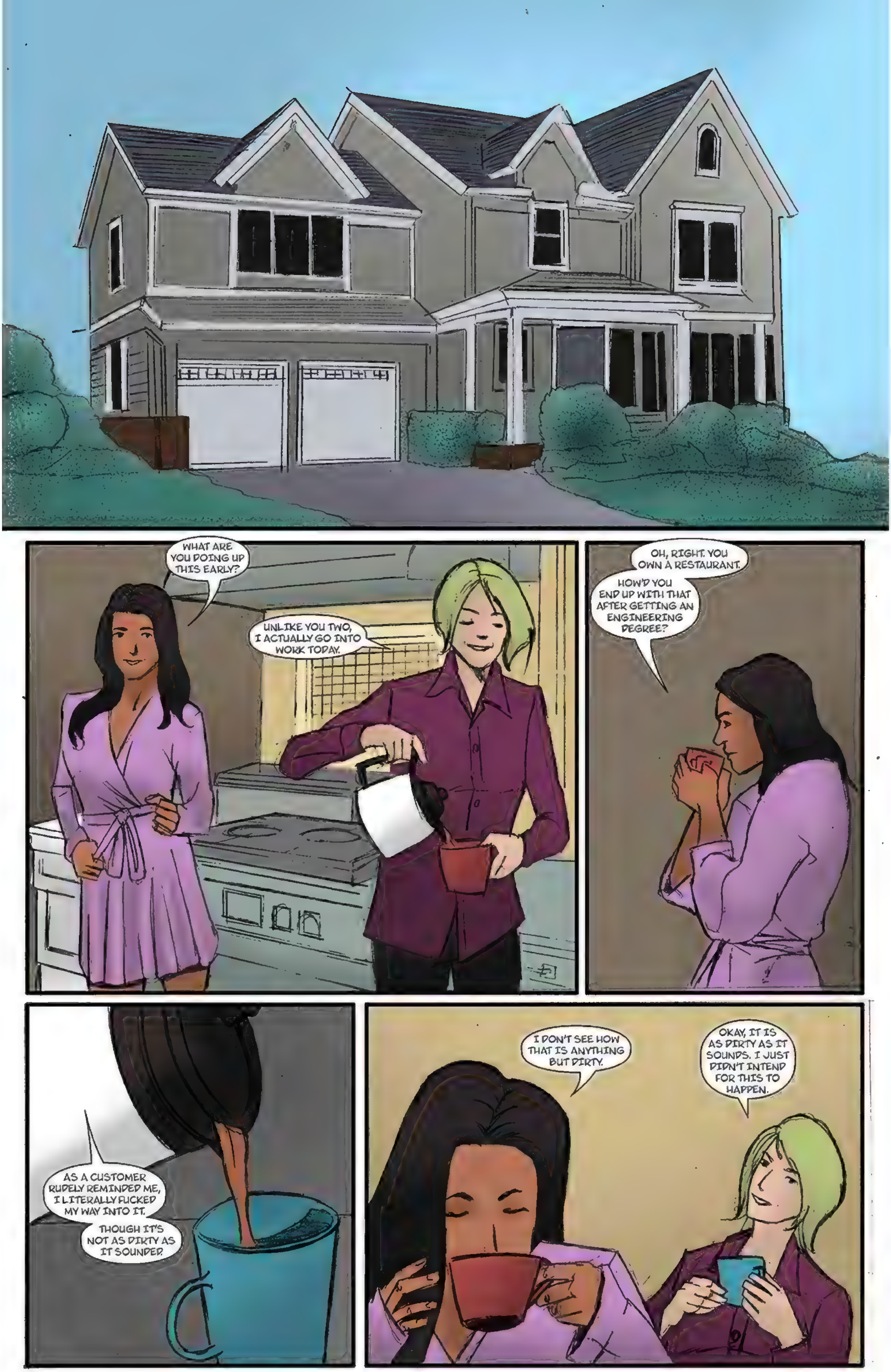
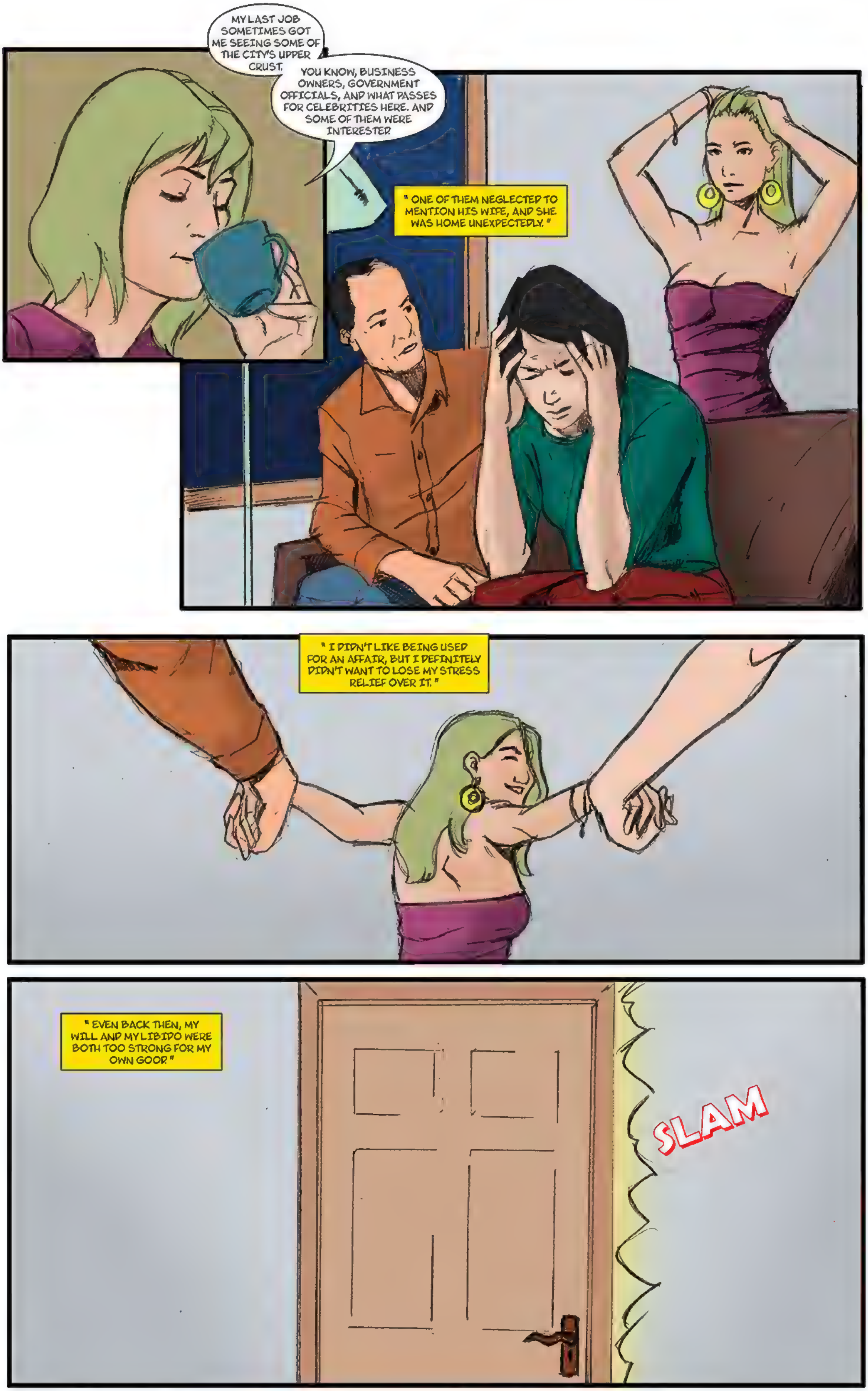
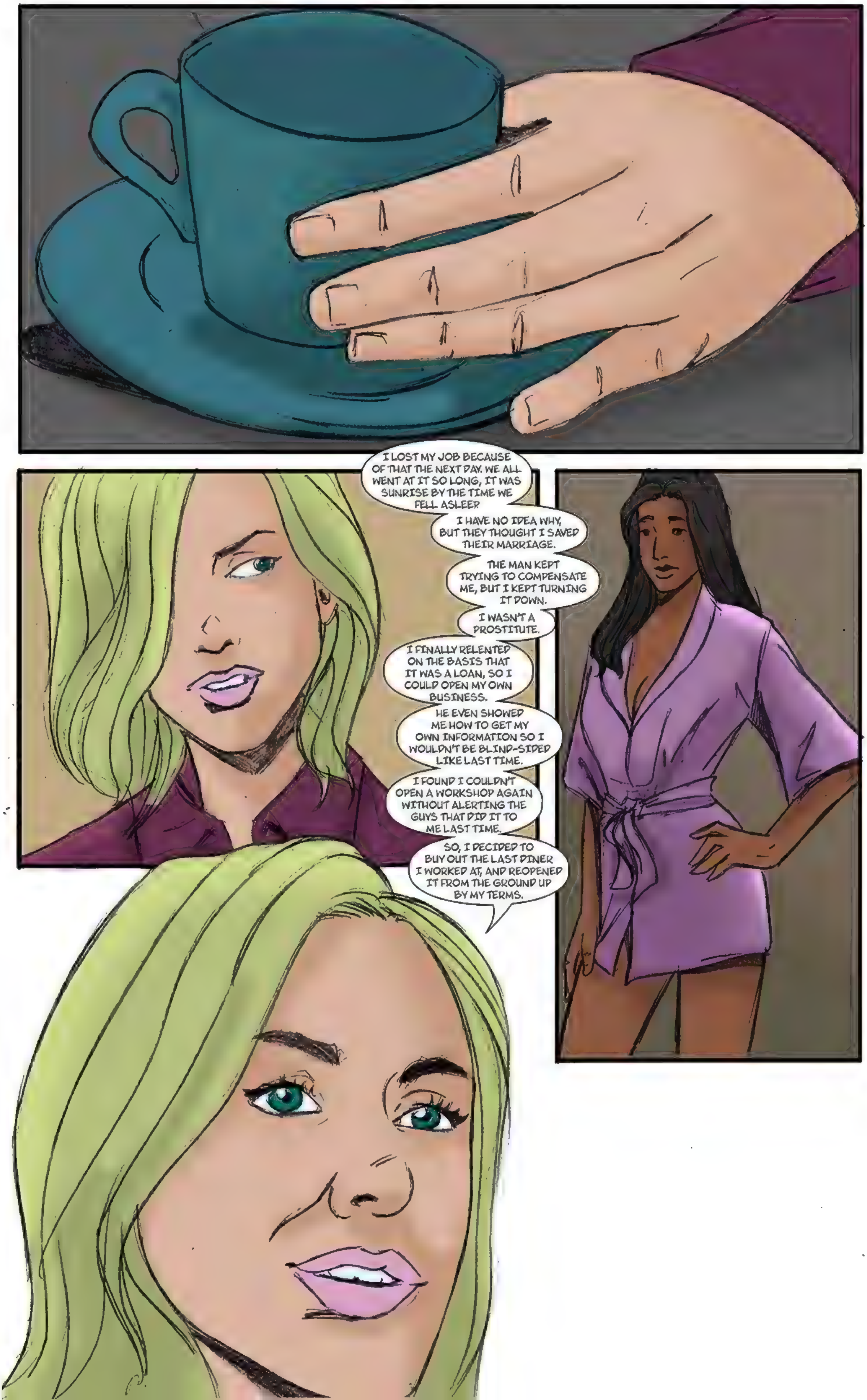


SERIOUSLY, THANKS FOR DOING THAT LAST NIGHT.
IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL. IT'S NOT LIKE WE WENT ALL THE WAY.
HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO HOLD OUT LIKE THAT?
I WRITE STORIES LIKE THAT, YOU KNOW. YOU HAVE TO JUST TO GET THE WORK DONE.
OH, RIGHT...
WAIT, SO IN THE SHOWER WERE YOU...?
DIDN'T DO ANY GOOD EITHER. TODAY IS GONNA BE AWKWARD AS HELL.


WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP THIS EARLY?
UNLIKE YOU TWO, I ACTUALLY GO INTO WORK TODAY.
OH, RIGHT. YOU OWN A RESTAURANT.
HOW'D YOU END UP WITH THAT AFTER GETTING AN ENGINEERING DEGREE?
AS A CUSTOMER RUDELY REMINDED ME, I LITERALLY FUCKED MY WAY INTO IT.
THOUGH IT'S NOT AS DIRTY AS IT SOUNDED.
I DON'T SEE HOW THAT IS ANYTHING BUT DIRTY.
OKAY, IT IS AS DIRTY AS IT SOUNDS. I JUST DIDN'T INTEND FOR THIS TO HAPPEN.

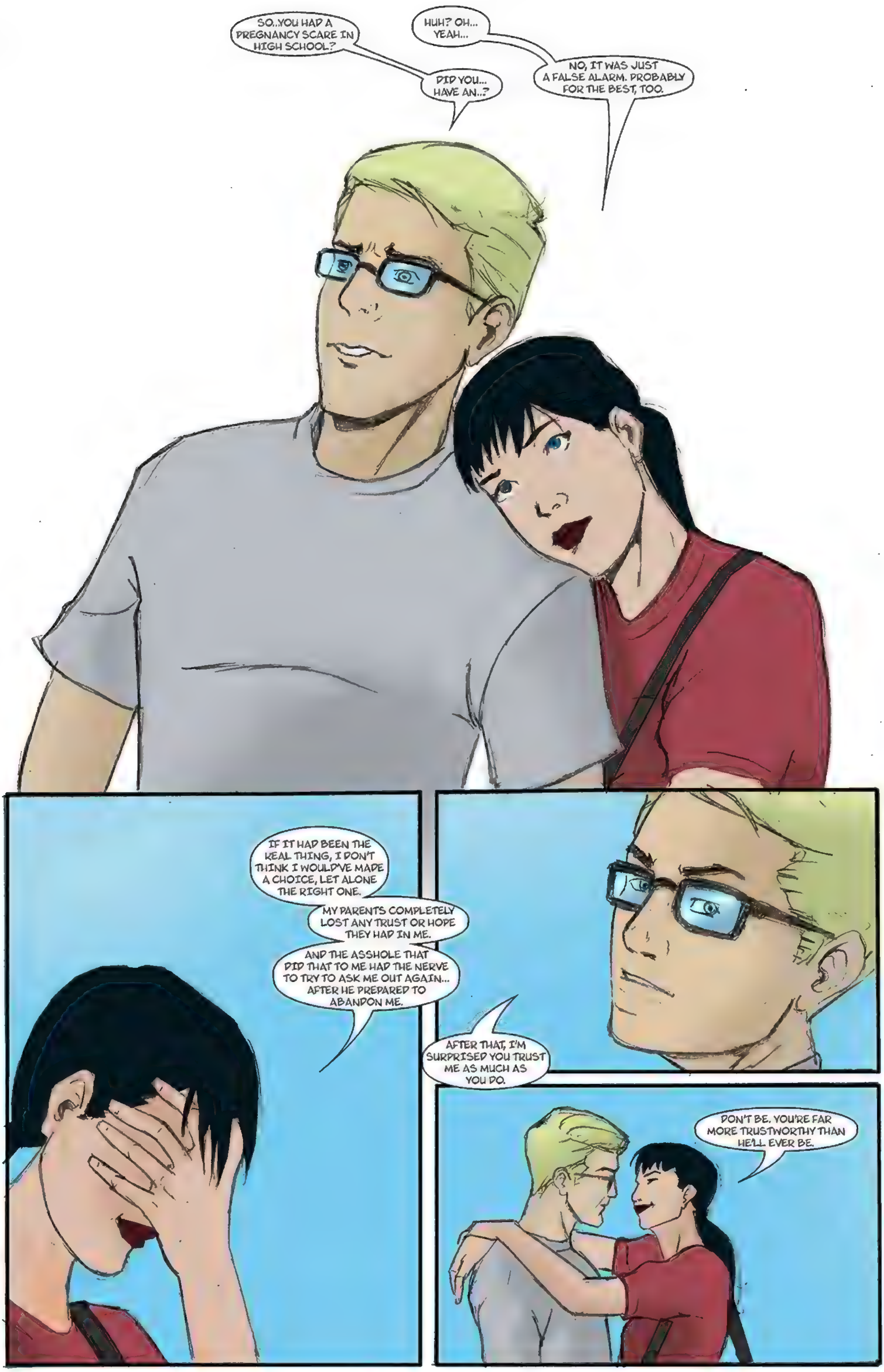
YOU EVER HAD A JOB? AND I MEAN A WAGE JOB, NOT A BUSINESS OR PROJECT YOU STARTED.
CAN'T SAY THAT I HAVE.
BELIEVE ME. THERE MAY BE SMALL BITS THAT CAN BE FUN, BUT COMPARED TO OWNING A BUSINESS, IT ISN'T FUN AT ALL.
I FOUND MYSELF GOING FROM JOB TO JOB AFTER MY WORKSHOP WENT UNDER.
IT WAS STRESSFUL ENOUGH AND I HAD A DWINDLING SUPPLY OF MONEY.
I CAN'T IMAGINE HOW HARD IT WOULD'VE BEEN FOR SOMEONE WITH NO MONEY.
WITH MY SHOP GONE, I HAD TO LOOK TO OTHER FORMS OF STRESS RELIEF.
TURNED OUT I ENJOYED GETTING LAID AND THERE WAS NO SHORTAGE OF PARTNERS.


MY LAST JOB SOMETIMES GOT ME SEEING SOME OF THE CITY'S UPPER CRUST.
YOU KNOW, BUSINESS OWNERS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, AND WHAT PASSES FOR CELEBRITIES HERE. AND SOME OF THEM WERE INTERESTED.
" ONE OF THEM NEGLECTED TO MENTION HIS WIFE, AND SHE WAS HOME UNEXPECTEDLY. "
" I DIDN'T LIKE BEING USED FOR AN AFFAIR, BUT I DEFINITELY DIDN'T WANT TO LOSE MY STRESS RELIEF OVER IT. "
" EVEN BACK THEN, MY WILL AND MY LIBIDO WERE BOTH TOO STRONG FOR MY OWN GOOD "
SLAM


I LOST MY JOB BECAUSE OF THAT THE NEXT DAY. WE ALL WENT AT IT SO LONG, IT WAS SUNRISE BY THE TIME WE FELL ASLEEP.
I HAVE NO IDEA WHY, BUT THEY THOUGHT I SAVED THEIR MARRIAGE.
THE MAN KEPT TRYING TO COMPENSATE ME, BUT I KEPT TURNING IT DOWN.
I WASN'T A PROSTITUTE.
I FINALLY RELENTED ON THE BASIS THAT IT WAS A LOAN, SO I COULD OPEN MY OWN BUSINESS.
HE EVEN SHOWED ME HOW TO GET MY OWN INFORMATION SO I WOULDN'T BE BLIND-SIDED LIKE LAST TIME.
I FOUND I COULDN'T OPEN A WORKSHOP AGAIN WITHOUT ALERTING THE GUYS THAT DID IT TO ME LAST TIME.
SO, I DECIDED TO BUY OUT THE LAST DINER I WORKED AT, AND REOPENED IT FROM THE GROUND UP BY MY TERMS.

SO THAT'S WHY YOU...
IT'S WHY I DO A LOT OF STUFF. IT'S WHY I SET UP A PERSONAL WORKSHOP IN MY GARAGE.
WHY NO ONE CAN CON ME ANYMORE. WHY I VIRTUALLY OVERPAY MY STAFF, EVEN THOUGH I'M NOT.
WORKING A WAGE JOB SUCKS. I'M NOT GONNA LIE, BUT I DON'T JUST PAY HIGH FOR EYE CANDY. EVERY EMPLOYEE I HIRED IS EITHER COMPETENT OR PROMISING. EVEN THE PART TIME HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT I RECENTLY HIRED.
WAIT, HOW MUCH ARE YOU PAYING THE HIGH SCHOOLER?
OH, ENOUGH. AND I THINK IT'LL EVEN BE A SURPRISE FOR HIM.
I ALMOST FORGOT ABOUT MY CH-
WAIT... AM I READING THIS RIGHT?
WHAT'S WRONG?
THIS CHECK SEEMS A BIT HIGH.
SHE PROBABLY PAID YOU FOR THE DAY SHE LET YOU OFF. SHE'S DONE THAT TO US, TOO.

SORRY IF I RUINED ANYTHING THIS MORNING.
NOTHING TO APOLOGIZE FOR.
I CAN'T COMPLAIN. I LOST MY VIRGINITY IN HIGH SCHOOL TO A CLASSMATE. JUST DID IT BECAUSE I FELT IT WAS EXPECTED AFTER I WENT OUT ON A DATE WITH HIM.
AND I MEAN ALL THE WAY, COMPLETE WITH A PREGNANCY SCARE.
I CAN'T COMPLAIN ABOUT YOU THIS MORNING AFTER YOU DID MORE THAN THAT GUY EVER DID LAST NIGHT.



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BURGER
KYLE? KYLE STILES, IS THAT YOU?
ERICA? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
IT IS YOU! I'M JUST VISITING FAMILY HERE.
WHAT ABOUT YOU? I FIGURED YOU WOULD BE IN CALI.
A LOT'S HAPPENED. REMEMBER DAVID?
THAT KID YOU ALWAYS HUNG OUT WITH? I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE HE WAS 10!
WELL, HE'S 16 NOW AND SHARING AN APARTMENT WITH ME.
MIND IF I ORDER MY LUNCH FIRST?
OKAY, YOU ARE GIVING ME THE FULL STORY ON THAT.

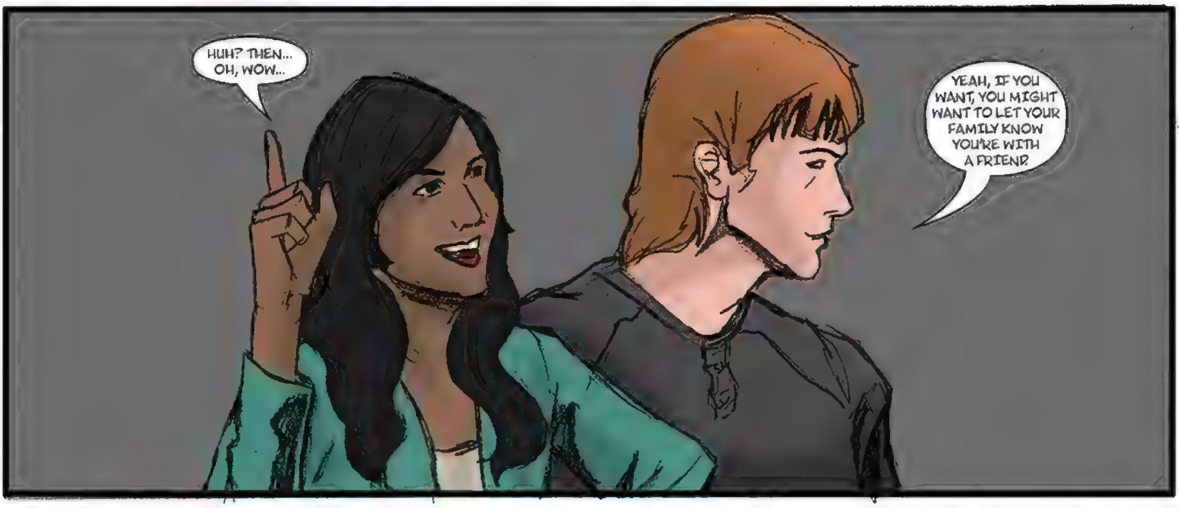
SO, WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL YOUR BIG PLANS?
THEY HAVEN'T CHANGED. JUST GOT DELAYED.
ALL FOR THE KID?
IF YOU KNEW EVEN HALF THE STORY OF HIS FAMILY LIFE, YOU WOULD, TOO.
AFTER GRADUATION, I WORKED FOR HIS FATHER AS A PERSONAL ASSISTANT, SO I GOT TO SEE A BIT OF THE INSIDE, TOO.
I DIDN'T VIEW MR. RAMSEY AS A BAD MAN, BUT BETWEEN HIS PARENTS, DAVID WAS BEING TORN APART.
STILL, THAT'S NOTHING TO GET YOURSELF INVOLVED IN. YOU SHOULD HAVE LET HIM SETTLE THINGS WITH THEM.
YOU NEVER MET THEM.
DOESN'T MATTER. HE SHOULD HAVE...
TRUST ME. HE NEEDED TO GET AWAY FROM THEM.

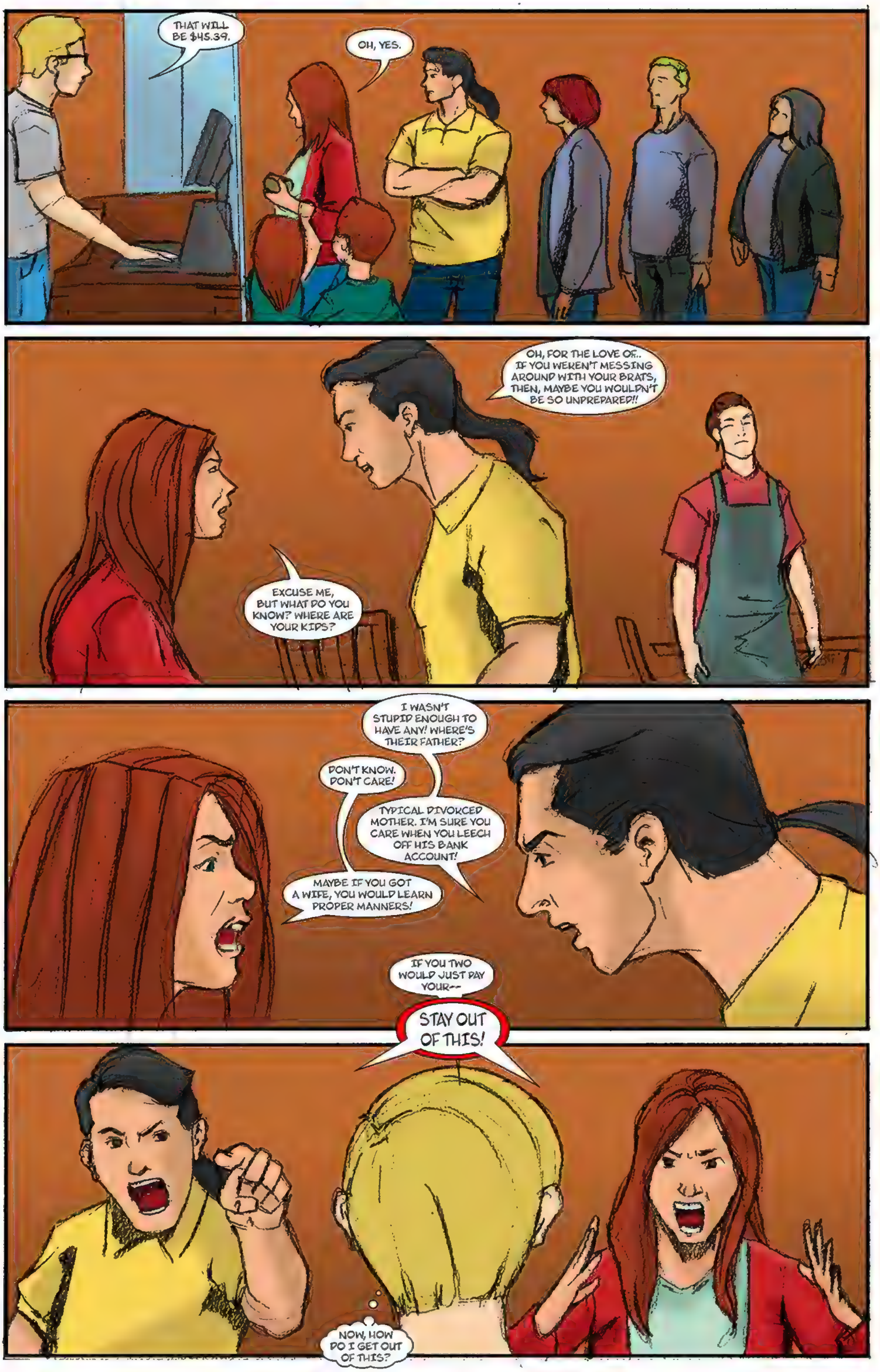
HOW DID YOU LET HIM SUCKER YOU INTO THAT?
I OFFERED IT TO HIM. I ALREADY HAD A 2-BEDROOM APARTMENT SO HE COULD SPEND THE NIGHT IF HE EVER NEEDED TO.
YOU FORGET THAT I WANTED TO SPEND TIME WITH HIM GROWING UP. THIS WAS A KID THAT DIDN'T NEED TO BE SHELTERED.
HELL, WE BOTH MET HIM THE FIRST TIME WHEN HE STUMBLED IN ON US.
IT'S NOT LIKE I HAD TO HIDE OR HOLD BACK ANYTHING JUST BECAUSE HE WAS THERE.
WELL, I'M CERTAINLY GLAD SOME THINGS DIDN'T CHANGE WITH YOU.

WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
EVEN BACK IN SCHOOL, YOU WERE LIKE THAT.
YOU DIDN'T CARE WHAT YOU DID AS LONG AS EVERYONE ENJOYED THEMSELVES.
IT WASN'T LIKE I WAS GOING OUT OF MY WAY FOR THESE THINGS.
I DON'T SEE WHY ANYONE MADE A BIG DEAL ABOUT IT.
NO, BUT YOU HELPED A LOT OF PEOPLE DOING SO. ME INCLUDED.

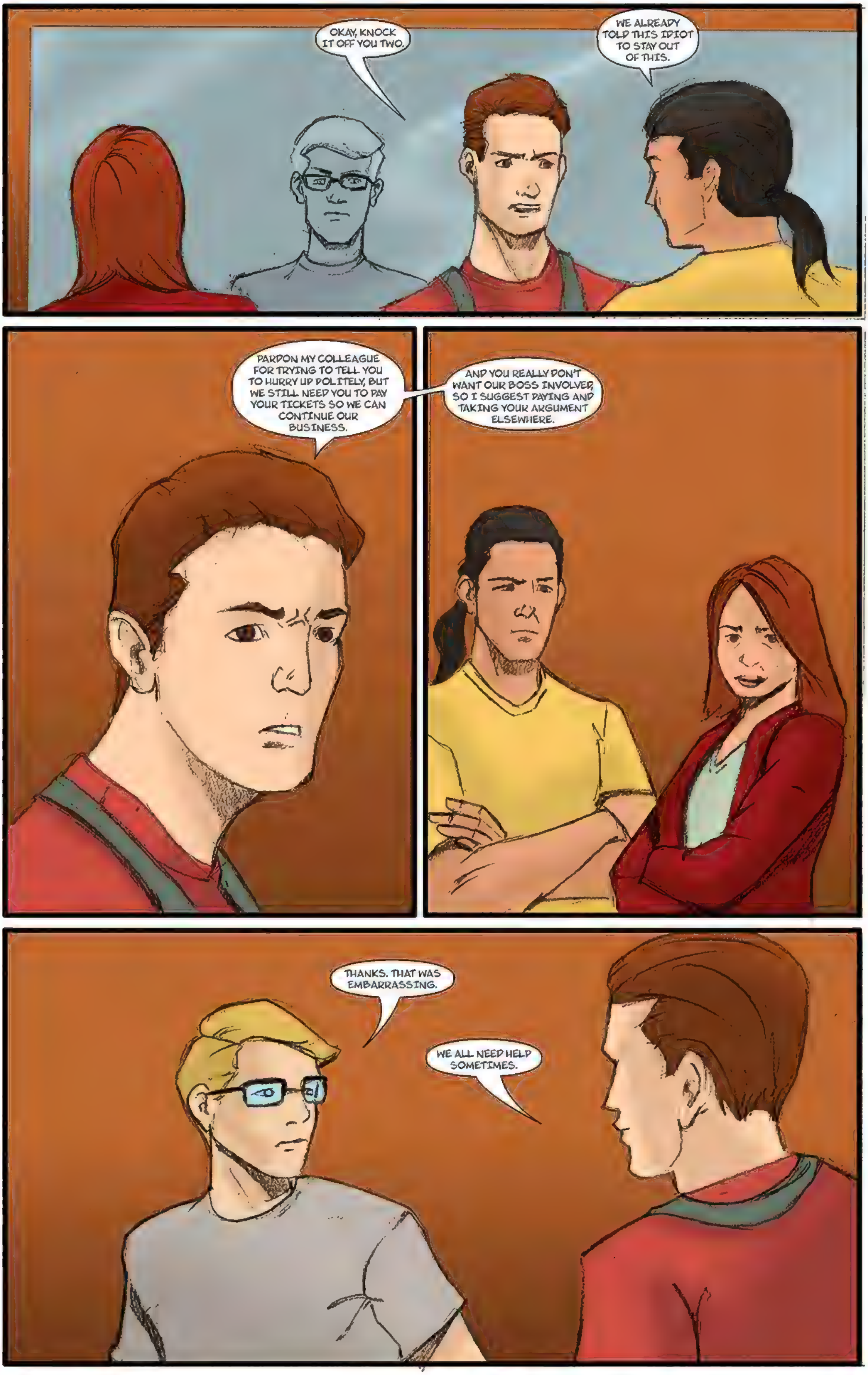
HOW? ALL WE DID WAS HAVE A QUICKIE OR TWO.
I MAY NOT HAVE BEEN OBESE, BUT I STILL WASN'T EXACTLY A MODEL IN HIGH SCHOOL EITHER.
IT WAS ENOUGH TO BE A TARGET FOR TAUNTING.
JUST KNOWING SOMEONE WAS INTERESTED IN ME, EVEN SEXUALLY, HELPED ME PULL THROUGH IT.
THE FACT THAT ONE TIME, YOU STOPPED JUST TO HELP DAVID MADE IT SEEM MORE...HONEST I GUESS.
TO PEOPLE THAT DIDN'T KNOW YOU, YOU WERE JUST A WOMANIZER.
THOSE THAT KNEW YOU KNEW YOU WERE SOMETHING ELSE.

SO...DID YOU HAVE ANY PLANS FOR TODAY?
NOT REALLY.
YOU WANT TO HAVE A QUICKIE?
I HAVEN'T HAD A QUICKIE IN YEARS.
YOU? HAVEN'T BEEN WITH A GIRL IN YEARS?
I DIDN'T SAY THAT...


HUH? THEN... OH, WOW...
YEAH, IF YOU WANT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO LET YOUR FAMILY KNOW YOU'RE WITH A FRIEND.


THAT WILL BE $45.39.
OH, YES.
OH, FOR THE LOVE OF.. IF YOU WEREN'T MESSING AROUND WITH YOUR BRATS, THEN, MAYBE YOU WOULDN'T BE SO UNPREPARED!!
EXCUSE ME, BUT WHAT DO YOU KNOW? WHERE ARE YOUR KIDS?
I WASN'T STUPID ENOUGH TO HAVE ANY! WHERE'S THEIR FATHER?
DON'T KNOW. DON'T CARE!
TYPICAL DIVORCED MOTHER. I'M SURE YOU CARE WHEN YOU LEECH OFF HIS BANK ACCOUNT!
MAYBE IF YOU GOT A WIFE, YOU WOULD LEARN PROPER MANNERS!
IF YOU TWO WOULD JUST PAY YOUR--
STAY OUT OF THIS!
NOW, HOW DO I GET OUT OF THIS?

OF COURSE. THERE GOES MR. DRAMA KING AGAIN.
IS THAT THE KID AGAIN?
AT LEAST, HE GETS HIS WORK DONE, BUT CAN HE QUIT ATTRACTING THIS STUFF?
VALERIE SEEMS TO LIKE HIM, SO I DON'T SEE HIM LEAVING ANYTIME SOON.
THIS DIDN'T EVEN HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH HIM.
HUH? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
MAYBE IF SOMEONE WOULD GET OFF THEIR HIGH HORSE AND HELP HIM, HE WOULDN'T BE HAVING THIS PROBLEM RIGHT NOW!



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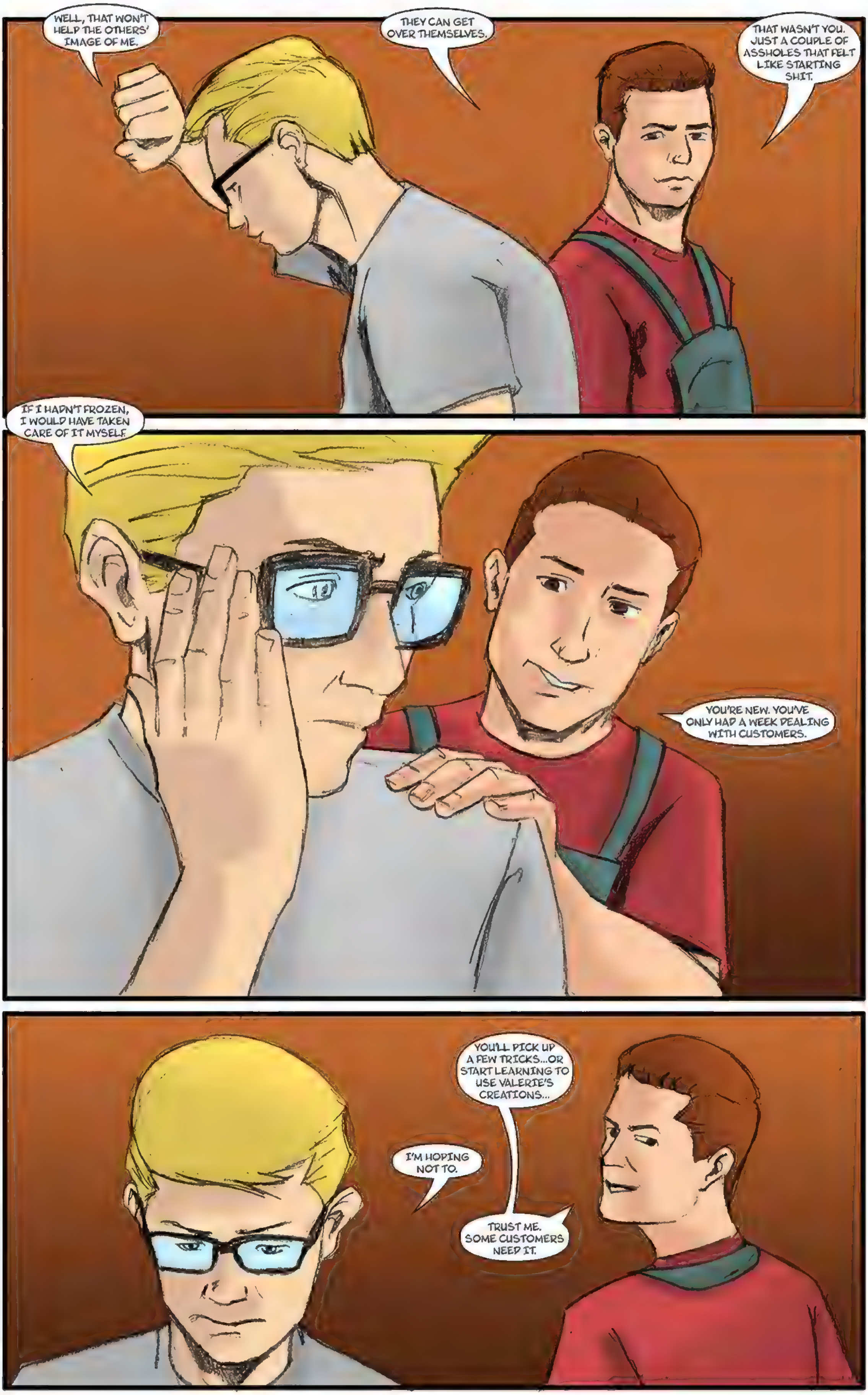
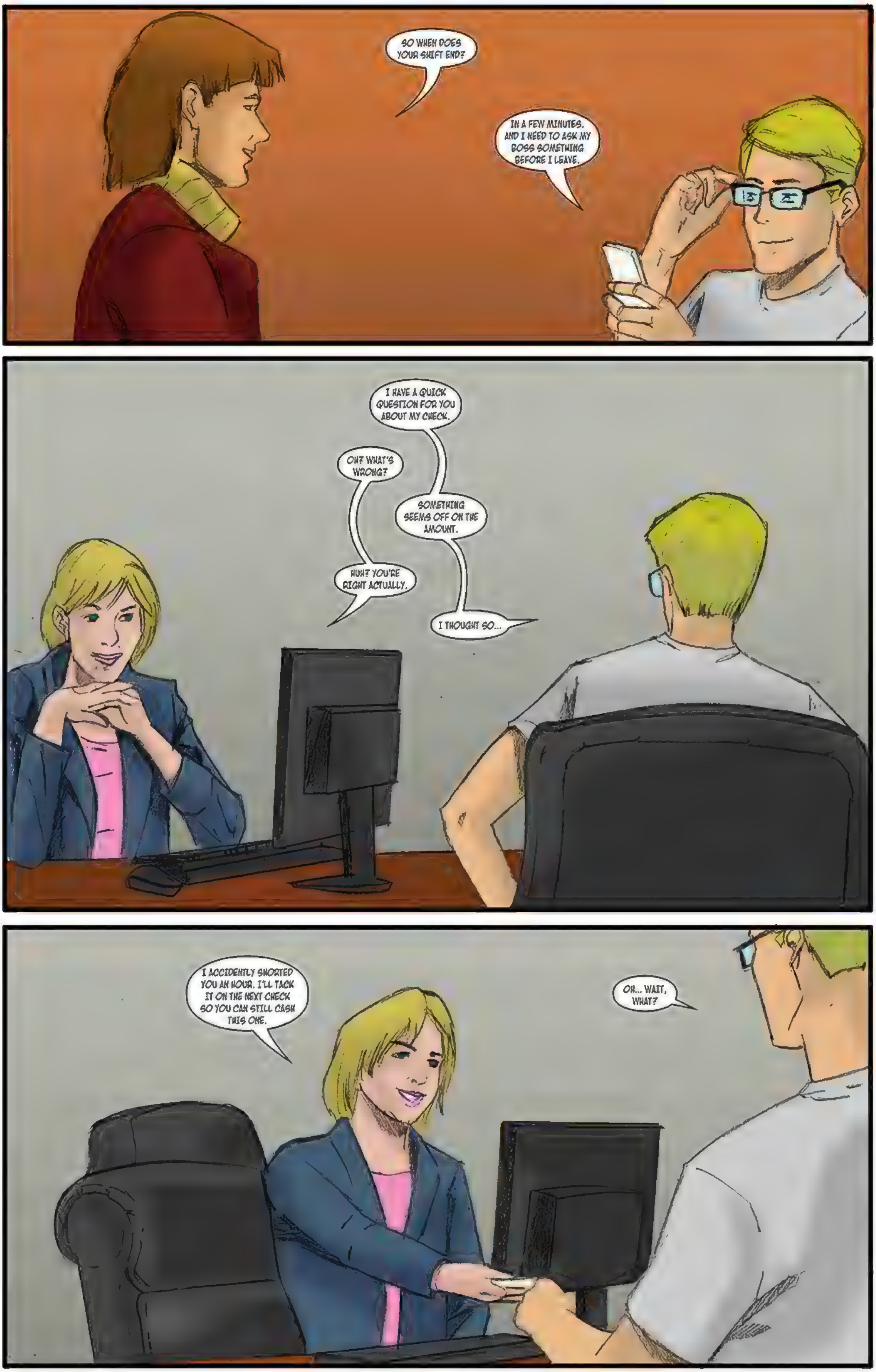

WELL, THAT WON'T HELP THE OTHERS' IMAGE OF ME.
THEY CAN GET OVER THEMSELVES.
THAT WASN'T YOU. JUST A COUPLE OF ASSHOLES THAT FELT LIKE STARTING SHIT.
IF I HADN'T FROZEN, I WOULD HAVE TAKEN CARE OF IT MYSELF.
YOU'RE NEW. YOU'VE ONLY HAD A WEEK DEALING WITH CUSTOMERS.
YOU'LL PICK UP A FEW TRICKS...OR START LEARNING TO USE VALERIE'S CREATIONS...
I'M HOPING NOT TO.
TRUST ME. SOME CUSTOMERS NEED IT.

MANUEL? I DIDN'T SEE YOU WALK IN.
YOU WERE BUSY WITH THAT ARGUMENT A WHILE BACK.
I WAS GETTING BORED AT HOME. MOST OF MY FAMILY IS AWAY THIS WEEKEND.
WHAT? NO PARTY WHILE THE PARENTS ARE AWAY?
HA... HA... NOT ALL OF THEM ARE GONE AND THEY'D KILL ME IF I TRIED.
SO... WAS THIS ALL YOU WANTED?
I WAS HOPING TO HANG OUT WITH YOU, ACTUALLY.
REALLY? WHY ME?
TO BE HONEST, I'VE BEEN GETTING SICK OF GETTING INVOLVED IN WHATEVER CRAP VICTOR AND THE OTHERS DO ANYWAY.



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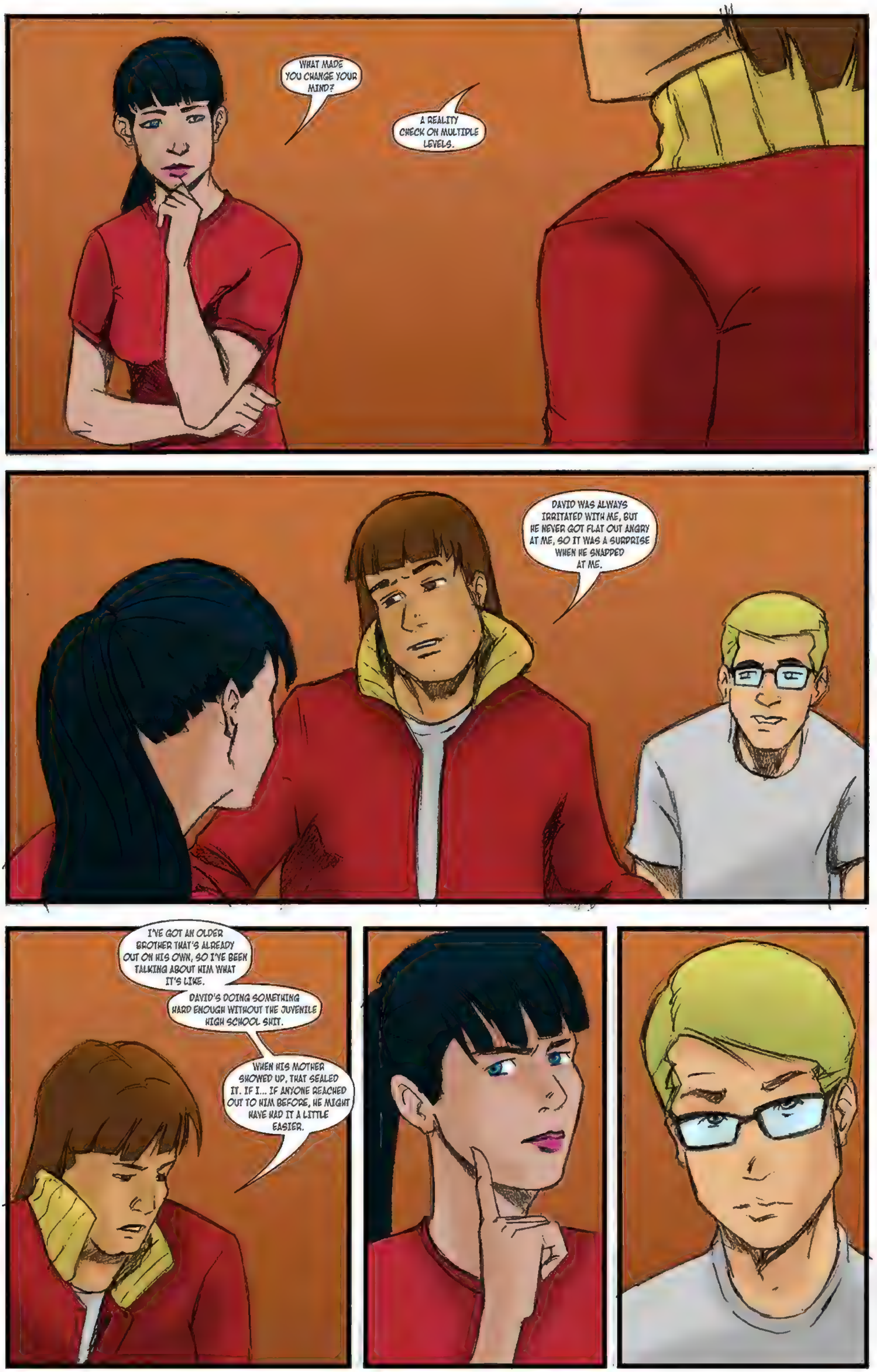
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
CALM DOWN. I'M JUST WAITING ON DAVID.
CONSIDERING YOU TRIED TO PUNCH DAVID OUT THE FIRST DAY I MET YOU.
DIDN'T YOU LEAVE BEFORE THAT HAPPENED?
MY BOSS TALKS. WHAT CAN I SAY?
WELL, I CAN'T CONVINCE YOU I'VE CHANGED, BUT I CAN SAY I'M JUST AS TIRED OF THAT BULLSHIT AS DAVID HAS BEEN.
BUT I WILL TELL YOU, I'M NOT LOOKING TO HURT HIM EVER AGAIN. NOT INTENTIONALLY ANYWAY.



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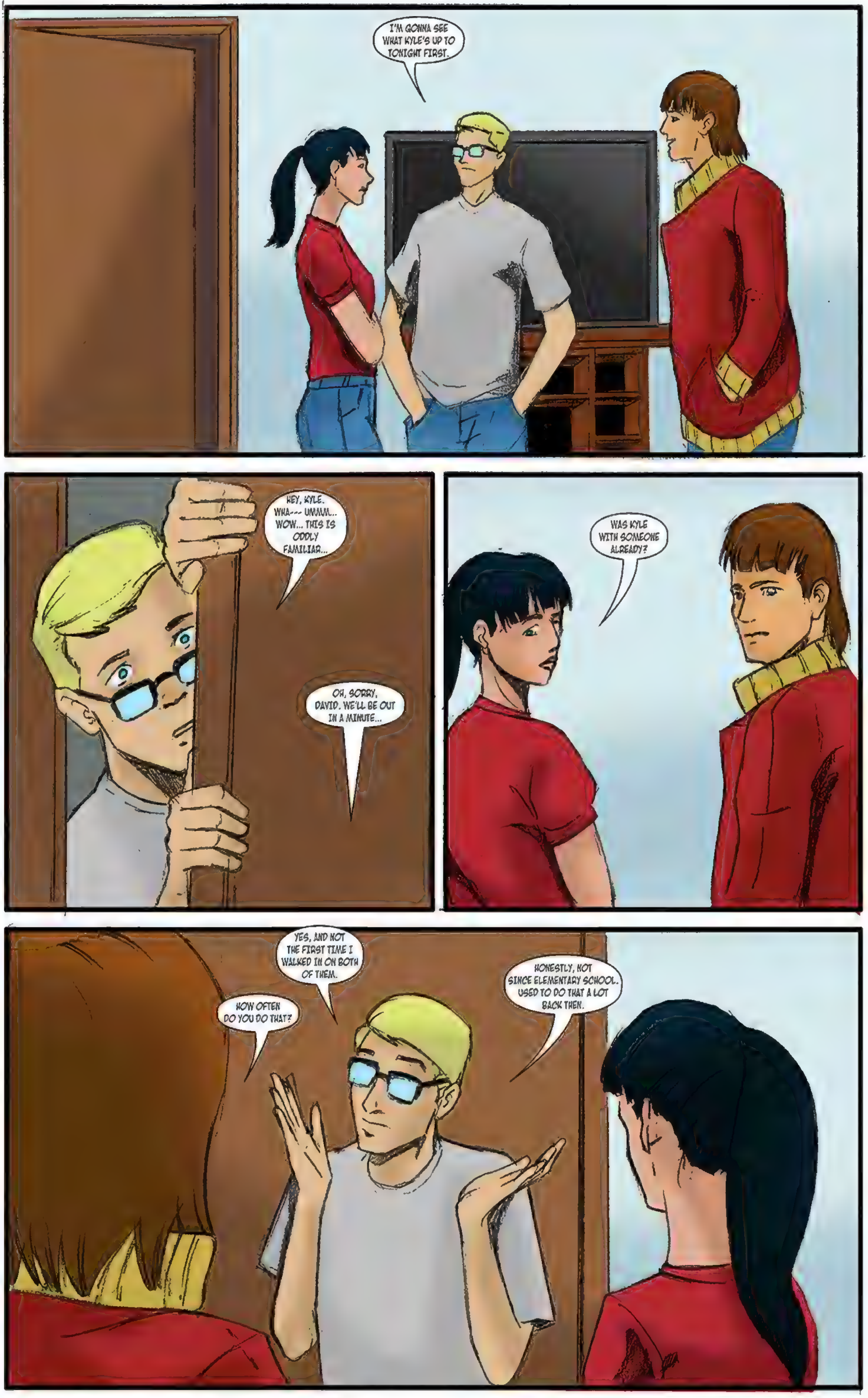
I'M GONNA SEE WHAT KYLE'S UP TO TONIGHT FIRST.
HEY, KYLE. WHA--- UMMM... WOW... THIS IS ODDLY FAMILIAR...
OH, SORRY, DAVID. WE'LL BE OUT IN A MINUTE...
WAS KYLE WITH SOMEONE ALREADY?
YES, AND NOT THE FIRST TIME I WALKED IN ON BOTH OF THEM.
HOW OFTEN DO YOU DO THAT?
HONESTLY, NOT SINCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. USED TO DO THAT A LOT BACK THEN.

WAIT, YOU SAID YOU WALKED IN ON BOTH OF THEM BEFORE?
YEAH, SHE'S ONE OF KYLE'S FRIENDS FROM HIGH SCHOOL.
I ACTUALLY MET KYLE THAT WAY... WITH HER.
HUH... I'M SURPRISED SHE HADN'T MOVED ON.
WHY WOULD YOU WALK IN ON SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
WELL, THE TIME I MET THEM, I WAS TRYING TO GET AWAY FROM YOU AND YOUR BUDDIES.
WAIT, WHEN WOULD THAT HAVE LED TO...
REMEMBER THAT PARTY YOU GOT KICKED OUT OF FOR PUNCHING ME?
OH...

HUH...DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO BRING PEOPLE OVER.
I THOUGHT THE BIG GUY LOOKED KINDA FAMILIAR.
HOW'VE YOU BEEN DOING, DAVID?
GETTING BETTER... KINDA.
AND SORRY ABOUT THAT. ARE YOU DAVID'S GIRLFRIEND?
WE'RE... WORKING ON THAT.
AND YOU?
MAKING UP FOR 10 YEARS OF HELL...

WELL, SINCE WE GOT A BIT OF A GROUP HERE, DO YOU MIND IF WE ORDER FOOD IN?
SURE, WHAT DID YOU HAVE IN MIND?
I'LL ORDER A LARGE PACK OF WINGS. YOU MIND PICKING THEM UP?
SURE. STACY? MANUEL? WANT TO COME WITH ME?
NAH, I THINK I'LL LET YOU TWO BE ALONE.
MANUEL, IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE GONNA BE MAKING OUT IN PUBLIC.
BESIDES, THERE'S A FEW QUESTIONS I HAVE FOR YOU, STILL.
WHY AM I SUDDENLY WORRIED?

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STACY, I TRUST YOU MORE THAN MOST PEOPLE. I'VE BEEN GETTING MORE COMFORTABLE WITH YOU THE MORE I'M WITH YOU.
I'M SENSING A 'BUT' HERE.
YOU DO UNDERSTAND THAT I'VE BEEN BURNED BADLY BY THE TWO PEOPLE I'M SUPPOSED TO TRUST WITHOUT QUESTION, RIGHT?
WELL, I KNOW YOUR MOTHER IS THE LEAST TRUSTWORTHY PERSON I CAN THINK OF.
YEAH, WELL, TELL THAT TO MY YOUNGER SELF.
DO YOU THINK I WAS IN ANY POSITION AS A KID TO DECIDE THAT?
I GUESS NOT.
YOU'VE HELPED ME A LOT. I'M JUST NOT THERE YET.
I NEED HELP FIGURING OUT WHEN I CAN LET THE LAST OF MY GUARD DOWN.

SERIOUSLY, WHAT IS IT?
OH, IT'S JUST STARTING TO MAKE SENSE. YOU'RE NOT INTO ANY WOMEN, ARE YOU?
OF COURSE, I'M INTERESTED IN...
NO. OH, NONONONONO... MY FAMILY IS CATHOLIC. I'M IN FOOTBALL. I'M EXPECTED TO BE MASCULINE. THERE IS NO WAY THAT'S THE CASE!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
HE'S ABOUT TO FIGURE THAT OUT.
THERE'S NO WAY I'M GAY...
ERICA, SERIOUSLY, WHY DID YOU JUST BREAK THE KID?
FIRST STEP TO FIGURING THINGS OUT.

SO WHAT?
HUH?
SO WHAT IF YOU WERE?
YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU?
MY LIFE WOULD BE TURNED UPSIDE DOWN! MY FAMILY WOULD DISOWN ME! THINGS WOULD BE AS BAD AS... NO...
IT WOULD ACTUALLY BE WORSE THAN WHAT DAVID WENT THROUGH.

HOW? HOW DID YOU COME TO THAT CONCLUSION ABOUT ME?
THERE WAS AN OLD LINE OF THOUGHT THAT BOYS WOULD PICK ON GIRLS... WELL...
ANYONE THEY LIKED BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T KNOW HOW ELSE TO EXPRESS IT THEMSELVES.
HELL, I WAS GUILTY OF DOING THAT TO A FEW GUYS WHEN I WAS A KID.
SERIOUSLY? THAT'S HOW YOU CAME TO THAT CONCLUSION?
THAT WAS THE START OF IT ANYWAY.
IT'S...NOT LIKE I EVER WANTED TO HAVE SEX WITH ANOTHER GUY.
MANUEL, THERE'S BIGGER DEPTHS TO THIS WHOLE THING THAN THAT.
HUH?

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PLEASE, JUST... DON'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT THIS.
WE AREN'T SAYING A WORD...
THOUGH, YOU MIGHT WANT TO TELL DAVID.
KID, IT MIGHT DO MORE THAN YOU THINK. CAN YOU TRUST HIM?
WHAT GOOD IS THAT GONNA DO? I KNOW HE ISN'T INTERESTED.
HUH? YEAH, MORE THAN I CAN TRUST MYSELF, AT LEAST.
HE NEEDS MORE PEOPLE HE CAN TRUST. OPEN UP TO HIM AND HE MIGHT OPEN UP TO YOU.

THINK YOU ORDERED ENOUGH WINGS, KYLE?
WELL, THERE ARE 5 OF US.
KYLE AND ERICA DIDN'T MESS WITH YOU TOO MUCH, DID THEY, MANUEL?
HUH? OH, YES. I MEAN NO. UMMM...
WHAT DID YOU TWO DO?
I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING...
I MEANT WE. GUT REACTION.
WAY TO THROW ME UNDER THE BUS, KYLE...

DAVID, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. THEY DIDN'T DO ANYTHING.
THEY'RE JUST PROTECTIVE OF ME, SO I COULD SEE THEM INTIMIDATING YOU.
HONESTLY, I DON'T BLAME THEM.
IT WAS NOTHING LIKE THAT.
THEY...WERE JUST TRYING TO FIGURE ME OUT. SOMETHING I THOUGHT I DID AWHILE AGO.

THANK YOU FOR THE MEAL, BUT I BETTER GET TO MY PARENT'S PLACE BEFORE THEY GET TOO WORRIED.
YOU WANT ME TO WALK WITH YOU?
HONESTLY, I DON'T THINK THEY'D APPRECIATE MEETING YOU AFTER THIS AFTERNOON.
IT WAS GOOD SEEING YOU AGAIN, DAVID.
SAME HERE.
OH, AND STACY? MANUEL? DON'T DO ANYTHING TO DAVID YOU WOULD REGRET.
YES, MA'AM...

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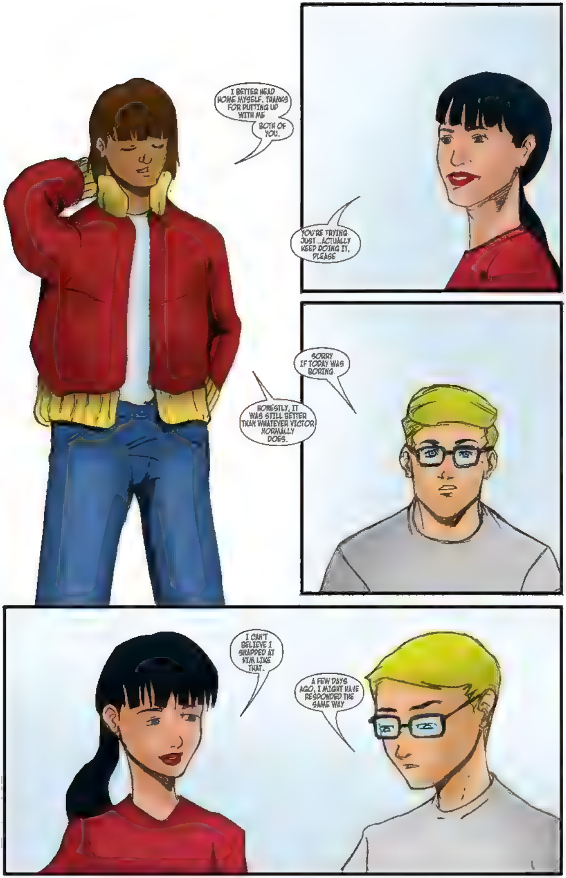
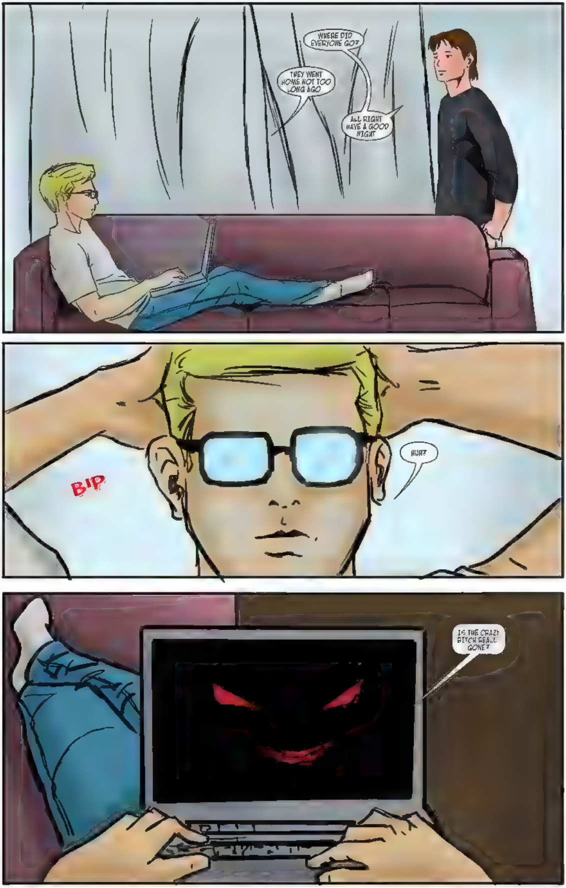
OUT I MIGHT NOT BE AS STRAIGHT AS I ASSUMED I WAS.
WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT ALL OF A SUDDEN?
WELL, I NEVER TOOK MUCH INTEREST IN GIRLS. I JUST ASSUMED I HADN'T FOUND ONE I'M INTERESTED IN
TURNS OUT THE ONLY CRUSH I HAD WAS ON DAVID. I WAS JUST TOO YOUNG TO REALIZE IT.
FUNNY WAY OF SHOWING IT.
WE WERE KIDS BACK THEN. EVEN YOU WOULDN'T HAVE KNOWN HOW TO.
IF MY DAD HADN'T GIVEN ME THE SEX ED TALK EARLIER THAN MOST, I MIGHT NOT HAVE.

WHY TELL US THIS?
BECAUSE I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO BE INTERESTED IN GUYS LIKE THAT EVEN IF IT'S NOT SEXUAL.
IF OTHERS FOUND OUT ABOUT IT ESPECIALLY MY FAMILY, IT WOULD BURY ME ALIVE, FIGURATIVELY.
SO I WANT YOU TWO TO PROMISE ME SOMETHING
DON'T TELL ANYONE?
NOT YET ANYWAY. IF I DO ANYTHING INTENTIONAL TO HURT DAVID, THEN YOU CAN TELL PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY MY FAMILY

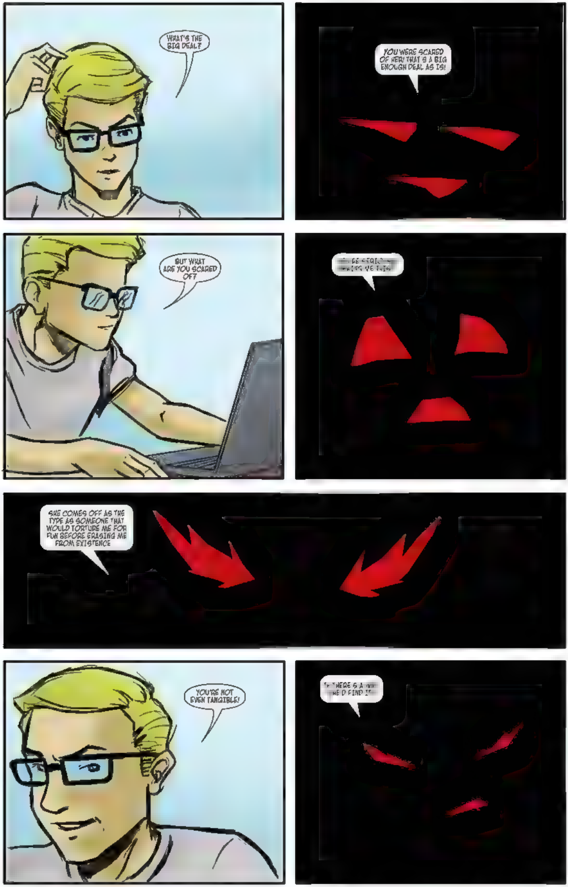
I SERIOUSLY THINK THAT WON'T DO ANY GOOD TO SOMEONE ON THE FOOTBALL TEAM IN SCHOOL.
YEAH, RIGHT. I'M A 3RD STRING LINEMAN ON JV. NO ONE WOULD MISS ME.
TO BE HONEST, I'M THINKING OF DROPPING IT. I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE WITH IT.
I RARELY SEE ANY GAME TIME AND I SCREW THAT UP WHEN I DO.
IF YOU'RE NOT THAT GREAT, THEN WHY DO YOUR COACHES KEEP YOU?
BECAUSE THE COACH LIKES HIS ENFORCERS. AND I'M BIG AND DUMB ENOUGH TO QUALIFY.
AN ENFORCER?
A PLAYER INTENTIONALLY PUT IN A GAME TO HIT KEY PLAYERS HARD FOR INTIMIDATION AND SOAK UP PENALTIES.
IT'S BETTER IF THE PLAYER EJECTED FOR UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT IS YOUR WORST PLAYER.
WHY QUIT? THAT TASK SOUNDS LIKE IT'S RIGHT UP YOUR ALLEY.
STACY!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. I DESERVED THAT ONE.

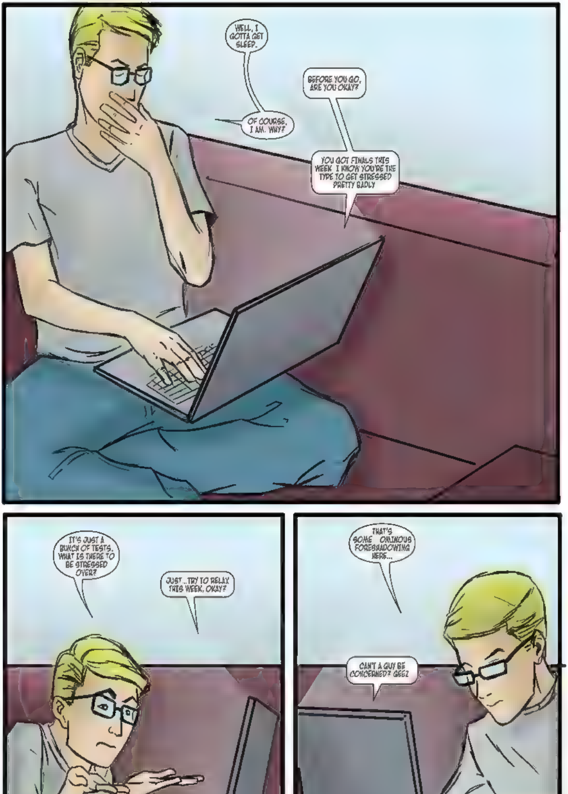

I BETTER HEAD HOME MYSELF. THANKS FOR PUTTING UP WITH ME
BOTH OF YOU.
YOU'RE TRYING. JUST ...ACTUALLY KEEP DOING IT, PLEASE
SORRY IF TODAY WAS BORING.
HONESTLY, IT WAS STILL BETTER THAN WHATEVER VICTOR NORMALLY DOES.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I SNAPPED AT HIM LIKE THAT.
A FEW DAYS AGO, I MIGHT HAVE RESPONDED THE SAME WAY

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, BRO?
JUST OUT WITH A FRIEND
YOU WEREN'T AT ANY OF YOUR NORMAL PLACES. AND YOUR FRIENDS SAID THEY HADN'T
DIFFERENT FRIEND
THEN, WHAT DID YOU DO?
I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING, OKAY? I WAS HANGING OUT AT THEIR APARTMENT FOR A WHILE.
THEN, WHAT'S WITH THE LOOK OF GUILT?
IT'S NOTHING I WANT TO TALK ABOUT, OKAY? I'M GONNA GET SOME SLEEP.
THIS EARLY?


WHERE DID EVERYONE GO?
THEY WENT HOME NOT TOO LONG AGO
ALL RIGHT HAVE A GOOD NIGHT
BIP
HUH?
IS THE CRAZY BITCH REALLY GONE?

ERICA ISN'T THAT BAD. AND YOU'VE MET STACY
WHO? NEVER MIND
WHO WOULD FUCK HER WILLINGLY?!
I TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT THAT. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.


WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?
YOU WERE SCARED OF HER! THAT IS A BIG ENOUGH DEAL AS IS!
BUT WHAT ARE YOU SCARED OF?
SHE COMES OFF AS THE TYPE AS SOMEONE THAT WOULD TORTURE ME FOR FUN BEFORE ERASING ME FROM EXISTENCE
YOU'RE NOT EVEN TANGIBLE!


WELL, I GOTTA GET SLEEP.
BEFORE YOU GO, ARE YOU OKAY?
OF COURSE, I AM. WHY?
YOU GOT FINALS THIS WEEK. I KNOW YOU'RE THE TYPE TO GET STRESSED PRETTY BADLY
IT'S JUST A BUNCH OF TESTS. WHAT IS THERE TO BE STRESSED OVER?
JUST...TRY TO RELAX THIS WEEK, OKAY?
THAT'S SOME OMINOUS FORESHADOWING HERE...
CAN'T A GUY BE CONCERNED? GEEZ

ONE MORE DAY OF WORK, THEN A SHORT WEEK OF SCHOOL. I CAN DEAL WITH THIS.
JUST GOT TESTS AND... GEEZ. GUESS I NEED TO PICK UP SOME LOZENGES.
NO TIME FOR THAT NOW. THIS'LL HAVE TO DO.
I'LL JUST GRAB SOMETHING AFTER WORK.

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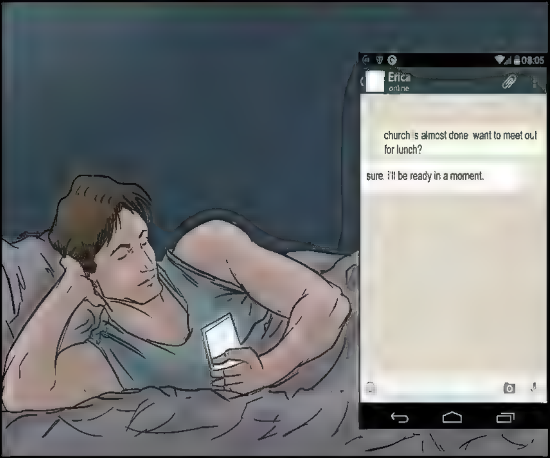
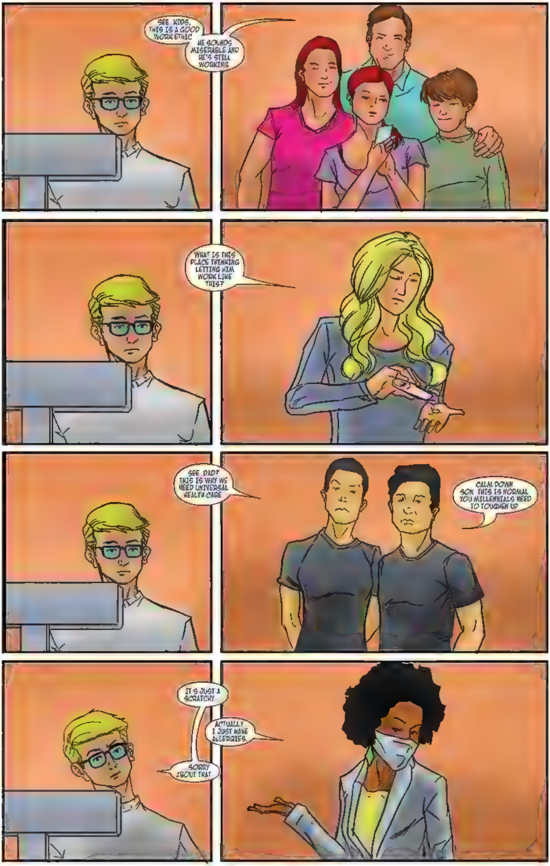
bzzzzzz
bzzzzzz


08:05
Erica
online
church is almost done want to meet out for lunch?
sure. I'll be ready in a moment.



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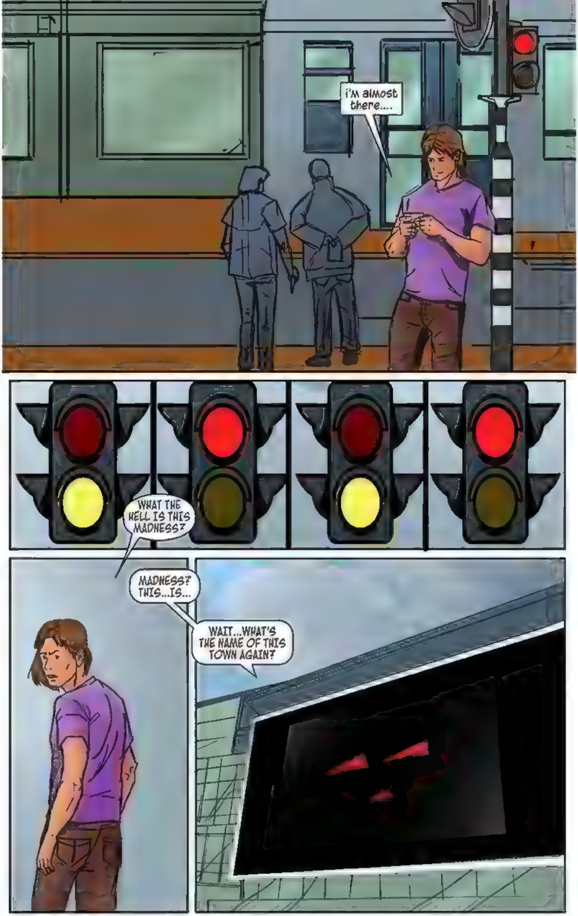

i'm almost there....
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS MADNESS?
MADNESS? THIS...IS...
WAIT...WHAT'S THE NAME OF THIS TOWN AGAIN?

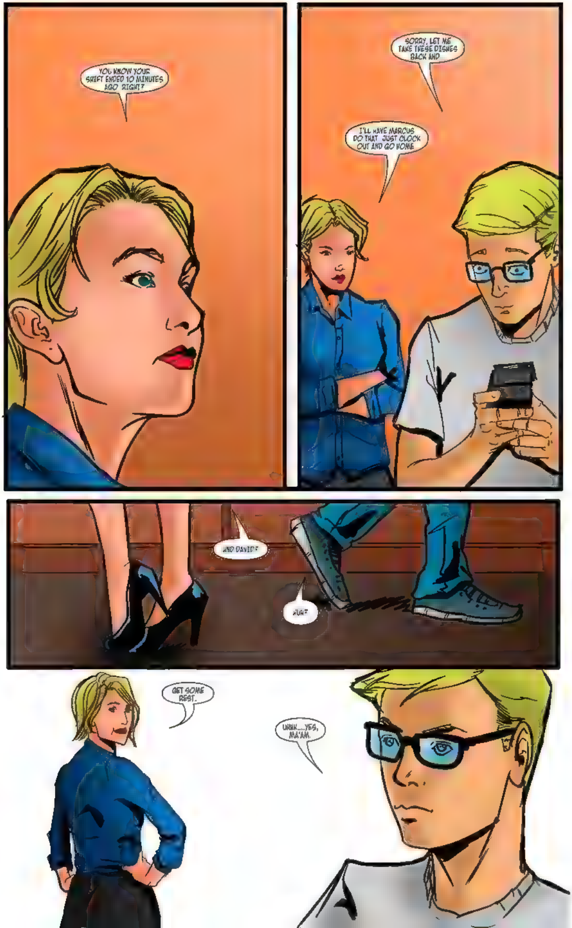
I THOUGHT YOU WERE ALMOST HERE
THE CRAZIEST THING JUST HAPPENED WITH THE TRAFFIC LIGHTS
SURE
NO, SERIOUSLY. IT'S STILL HAPPENING
REALLY. I SWEAR IT'S LIKE IT'S BLINKING IN MORSE CODE
MORSE CODE?
YEAH. HAD TO LEARN IT FOR PREVIOUS WORK...
...I'D BE MORE IMPRESSED IF WHOMEVER IS DOING THIS, DIDN'T JUST CODE "BOW CHICKA WOW WOW" REPEATEDLY.

OH HI! DID YOU TWO JUST COME BY FOR LUNCH?
YEAH, BUT YOU DON'T SOUND TO WELL.
JUST A SORE THROAT. I'LL GET SOMETHING AFTER WORK, BUT I THINK IT'S GETTING WORSE.
JUST BE CAREFUL.
YOU GONNA BE OKAY?
OTHER THAN THE OCCASIONAL COMMENTARY, NOTHING I CAN'T HANDLE.
COMMENTARY?
YEAH, APPARENTLY WORKING SICK GETS YOU TURNED INTO AN EXAMPLE FOR EVERYONE'S POLITICAL OPINION.

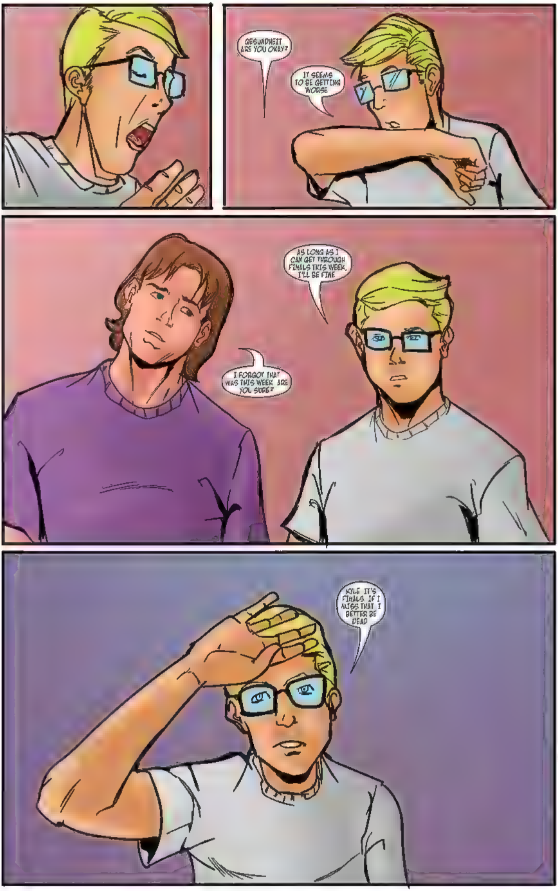
YOU SURE HE'LL BE OKAY?
FOR NOW. HE DOES HAVE A TENDENCY TO OVERDO IT. BUT HE'S FINE RIGHT NOW
WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHEN ARE YOU GOING BACK?
I WON'T BE LEAVING FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER WEEK.
"AT LEAST"?
I GOT A FEW JOB INTERVIEWS HERE THIS WEEK. IF I GET ANY OF THE JOBS, I'M COMING BACK
SO MUCH FOR LEAVING HOME HUH?
GOTTA GO WHERE THE JOBS ARE.

WHAT ABOUT YOU? DON'T YOU WANT A FAMILY?
AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, DAVID IS FAMILY
I MEANT, YOUR OWN
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEANT, BUT THE POINT STILL STANDS.
I'M NOT LOOKING FOR ANYTHING SERIOUS, AND I MAKE THAT A POINT WITH EVERYONE I'VE BEEN WITH
IF IT TURNS OUT MORE, THEN IT DOES BUT I'M NOT LOOKING FOR IT
WOULDN'T YOU REGRET IT IF YOU HADN'T?
I'D REGRET IT EVEN MORE IF I JUMPED IN ON A MARRIAGE WITH SOMEONE I WASN'T FULLY READY FOR

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU'LL REGRET IT IF YOU DON'T
HOW MUCH DO YOU REALLY KNOW ABOUT ME?
HUH?
MORE THAN YOU THINK. LESS THAN I THOUGHT
WHAT YOU DO KNOW ABOUT ME. WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO TOLERATE IT LATER?
I DON'T KNOW
I JUST THOUGHT WITH YOU TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR DAVID
DAVID'S LIKE A BROTHER TO ME NOT MY SON
UNLIKE MOST PEOPLE HIS AGE, LET ALONE KIDS, HE CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF
BUT DON'T GET ME WRONG. IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO HIM
I'M NOT GONNA JUST LEAVE HIM ALONE


YOU KNOW YOUR SHIFT ENDED 10 MINUTES AGO RIGHT?
SORRY, LET ME TAKE THESE DISHES BACK AND
I'LL HAVE MARCUS DO THAT. JUST CLOCK OUT AND GO HOME
AND DAVID?
HUH?
GET SOME REST.
UHHH....YES, MA'AM.

ARE YOU OKAY?
ACCIDENTLY WORKED PAST MY SHIFT.
DO YOU NEED ANYTHING FROM THE STORE?
I'LL COME WITH YOU
NO OFFENSE GUYS, BUT I REALLY DON'T WANT TO CATCH WHAT YOU HAVE, DAVID
DON'T BLAME YOU GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
I DON'T SEE US GOING OUT TO EAT YOU'RE GETTING SOUP AS WELL.
NO SOUP FOR YOU?
HAAAAA. HAAAA. SEINFELD



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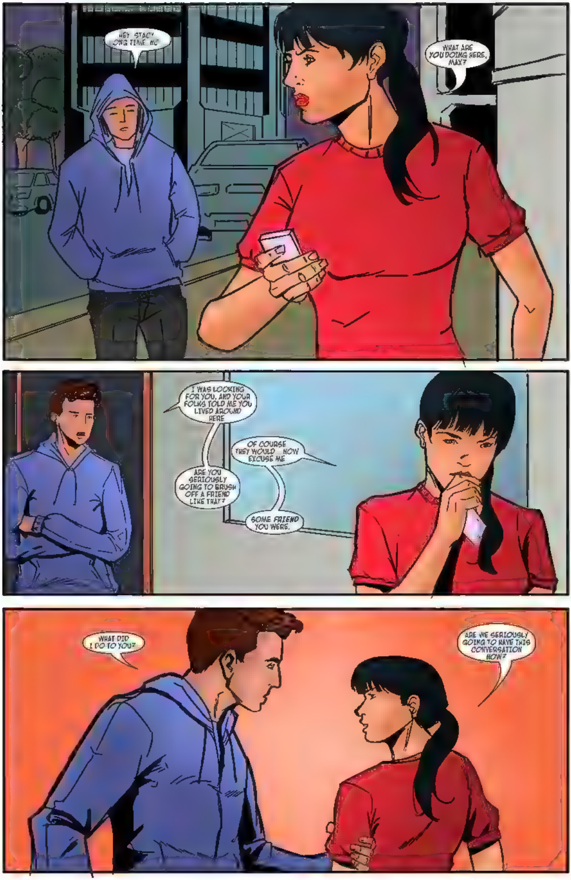

HEY STACY LONG TIME NO
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, MAX?
I WAS LOOKING FOR YOU, AND YOUR FOLKS TOLD ME YOU LIVED AROUND HERE
OF COURSE THEY WOULD. NOW EXCUSE ME
ARE YOU SERIOUSLY GOING TO BRUSH OFF A FRIEND LIKE THAT?
SOME FRIEND YOU WERE.
WHAT DID I DO TO YOU?
ARE WE SERIOUSLY GOING TO HAVE THIS CONVERSATION NOW?

LISTEN, I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT THIS NOW NOR EVER
YOU REALLY NOT WANT TO TALK LIKE ADULTS?!
YOU KNOW YOUR FOLKS ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOU?
SO THEY SEND THE ONE GUY THAT CAUSED ALL THE PROBLEMS?

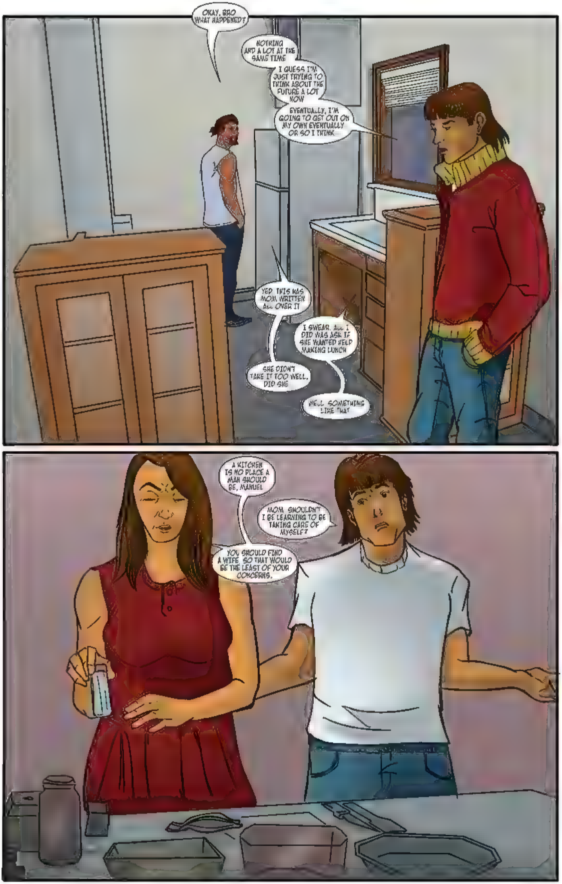
HOONK
THE ONES THAT TOLD ME YOU HAVEN'T
MANUEL?
WHAT THE HELL? ARE YOU FUCKING NUTS KID?
NO WHERE NEAR AS CRAZY AS YOU
WHATEVER KID GET LOST THIS IS BETWEEN US
YOU FIRST

STACY, YOU DON'T MIND IF I CUT IN, DO YOU?
FEEL FREE
HUH?!
YOU BRAT?!
IF I HADN'T NEEDED THE STRESS RELIEF, I WOULD'VE GLADLY LET STACY DE-BAL YOU
KRAK
KRAK
KRAK
GAAAHHHH...

GO AHEAD AND KEEP TRYING. I GOT MORE STEAM TO LET OFF.
YOU SPOILED
KID, YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON.
SPOILED? I'M NOT THE ONE REFUSING TO TAKE 'NO' FOR AN ANSWER.
HE DOESN'T NEED TO.
GET LOST. I DON'T EVER WANT TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

FINE
I'D ASK, BUT I THINK THE SAFER THING TO DO IS NOT TO
DAMN STRAIGHT IT IS
DON'T THINK THIS MAKES ME TRUST YOU
HEY, I DON'T EXPECT ANYTHING
WHAT WERE YOU DOING HERE ANYWAY?
WALKING. NEEDED TO CLEAR MY HEAD
JUST HAD A LOT TO THINK ABOUT LATELY

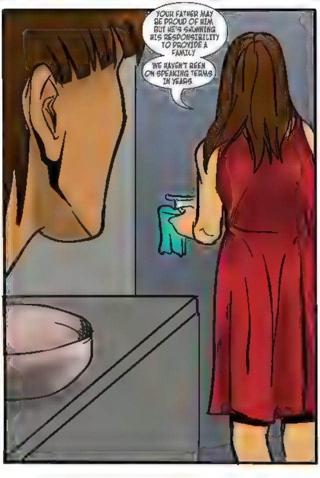
BRO? WHAT'S WRONG?
CARLOS SORRY JUST THINKING
REALLY
COME ON IN SOUNDS LIKE YOU NEED TO TALK
I SHOULD GET HOME BUT
YOU REALLY DON'T WANT TO GO HOME RIGHT NOW DO YOU?
I UH
I'LL TELL MOM YOU'RE STAYING OVER TONIGHT WHEN I GO GET YOUR SCHOOL STUFF


OKAY, BRO WHAT HAPPENED?
NOTHING AND A LOT AT THE SAME TIME
I GUESS I'M JUST TRYING TO THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE A LOT NOW
EVENTUALLY, I'M GOING TO GET OUT ON MY OWN EVENTUALLY OR SO I THINK.
YEP. THIS HAS MOM WRITTEN ALL OVER IT
I SWEAR, ALL I DID WAS ASK IF SHE WANTED HELP MAKING LUNCH
SHE DIDN'T TAKE IT TOO WELL, DID SHE
WELL, SOMETHING LIKE THAT
A KITCHEN IS NO PLACE A MAN SHOULD BE, MANUEL
MOM, SHOULDN'T I BE LEARNING TO BE TAKING CARE OF MYSELF?
YOU SHOULD FIND A WIFE, SO THAT WOULD BE THE LEAST OF YOUR CONCERNS.

ISN'T THAT KINDA
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO ASK. DON'T BOTHER
I WAS HOPING I WOULD NEVER HAVE TO HAVE THIS CONVERSATION WITH YOU, BUT A MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY IS TO SOCIETY SO HE CAN PROVIDE FOR HIS FAMILY
IT'S THE WOMAN'S JOB TO CARE FOR AND MANAGE THE FAMILY
THINGS AREN'T REALLY LIKE THAT ANYMORE, THOUGH
WHAT? THEY'VE IMPROVED?
NO. SUCH SELFISH THINKING HAS ONLY MADE THINGS WORSE TODAY

RESPONSIBILITIES MAY HAVE INTERMIXED, BUT THE PRIMARY ROLE OF A MAN AND WOMAN HAVEN'T CHANGED MANUEL
SO FIND YOURSELF A WIFE AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT YOURSELF. WORRY ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR SOCIETY
AND DON'T FOLLOW CARLOS' SELFISH EXAMPLE

CARLOS? WHAT ABOUT HIM?


YOUR FATHER MAY BE PROUD OF HIM BUT HE'S SHUNNING HIS RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE A FAMILY
WE HAVEN'T BEEN ON SPEAKING TERMS IN YEARS.

YEP BEEN A WHILE SINCE MOM AND I SAID A WORD TO EACH OTHER.
I DON'T GET IT YOU HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING WRONG?
IT'S WHAT I HAVEN'T DONE THAT UPSETS HER TO BE HONEST IT'S NOT HER DECISION.
SHE PROBABLY SUSPECTS I'M GAY, WHICH MAKES THINGS WORSE TO HER
OH
LISTEN BRO I'M NOT GONNA TELL YOU WHAT TO DO. THAT'S YOUR DECISION.
AND ALL DECISIONS RIGHT OR WRONG, HAVE THEIR CONSEQUENCES JUST BE PREPARED FOR THAT

BZZZT
BZZZT
DAVID MUST REALLY BE OUT OF IT IF HE LEFT HIS PHONE
HELLO?
KYLE? I WAS TRYING TO CALL DAVID
HE'S ACTUALLY ASLEEP
HUH?
YEAH, HE HASN'T BEEN FEELING WELL TODAY. I CAN'T SEE HIM WAKING UP RIGHT NOW

IS HE OKAY?
YEAH IT'S JUST A COLD, BUT I'M AFRAID HE'LL PUSH HIMSELF TOO HARD.
IT'S THE LAST WEEK OF SCHOOL, SO HE FEELS HE CAN'T AFFORD TO MISS IT
UGH... FINALS
NEEDED TO TALK WITH HIM ABOUT SOMETHING
WERE YOU NEEDING SOMETHING?
AND SORRY, I DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT IT WITH YOU
THAT'S FINE I'LL TELL HIM YOU CALLED WHEN HE WAKES UP

DAMN IT I CAN BARELY BREATHE
GOTTA GET READY I CAN'T AFFORD TO
3:22 AM
FUCK MY LIFE

HERE WE GO AGAIN
IT BETTER BE TIME TO GET UP OR I'M GONNA BE ROYALLY PISSED
5:46 AM
FUCK IT IT'S CLOSE ENOUGH

OKAY, JUST GET YOUR BEARINGS STRAIGHT AND GET UP
NOT GOOD FEELING DIZZY
JUST TAKE A SHOWER AND SOME MEDS AND YOU'LL BE FINE DAMN, WIMP

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HI, DAVID! UHH... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE KYLE?
MAKING SURE HE DOESN'T KILL
'L BE FINE
YOU REALLY DON'T LOOK WELL
I'LL GET OVER IT
KEEP AN EYE ON HIM FOR ME, WILL YA? YOU KNOW HOW HE IS
YEAH.
MORE THAN MOST PEOPLE THINK

HURRY UP ALREADY
ABOUT TIME...
COME ON FOCUS

SIR, HE'S SERIOUSLY BURNING UP HERE
NOT NOW

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WHAT IS THAT IDIOT THINKING?
HE BETTER BE HERE IF HE KNOWS WHAT'S GOOD FOR HIM
COACH STEVENS?
WHERE'S RODRIGUEZ?
HE TOOK SOMEONE TO THE NURSE'S OFFICE
WHY WOULD YOU SEND HIM TO DO THAT?
BECAUSE NO ONE ELSE WOULD

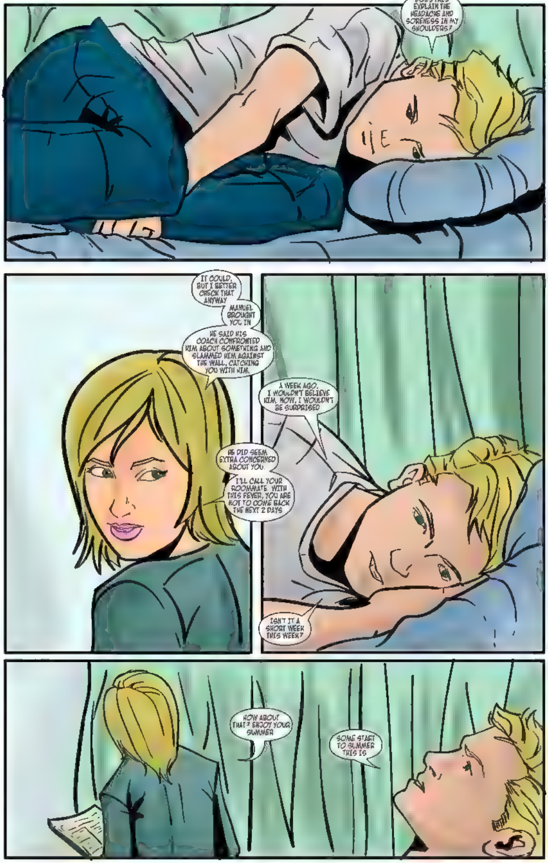
COACH STEVENS?
WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA RODRIGUEZ?
I'M JUST TAKING DAVID TO THE NURSE HE'S SICK
HALL PASS
Date:
Student:
Time:
Destination:
Bathroom
Library
NOW, YOU'RE SKIPPING CLASS AN EXAM NO LESS
AND IF YOU DON'T ANSWER MY QUESTIONS CORRECTLY, YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF WITH ME IN DETENTION
COME ON COACH I GOTTA GET
HE'S WORTHLESS AND SO ARE YOU IF YOU MAKE ONE MORE MISTAKE

WHY ARE YOU NOT ON THE ROSTER NEXT YEAR?
WHAT DOES IT MATTER TO YOU? YOU AND I BOTH KNOW I'M GARBAGE
NO. YOU'RE ONE STEP FROM GARBAGE THERE'S A DIFFERENCE RODRIGUEZ
WHAT? BEING AN ON-FIELD THUG?
WELL, YOU'RE GOOD AT NOTHING ELSE, SO WHY ARE YOU QUITTING THAT?
I JUST DON'T SEE A FUTURE THERE. SO
WHO CARES ABOUT YOUR FUTURE?
CLANG

AFTER I M DONE WITH YOU, YOU CAN ROT IN JAIL FOR ALL ANYONE CARES, SO AT LEAST BE USEFUL!
WHAT? CAN'T WIN WITHOUT YOUR PERSONAL ATTACK DOG?
THAT DOESN'T MATTER ALL THAT MATTERS TO YOU IS YOU'RE NOTHING WITHOUT ME
IT SOUNDS LIKE THE OTHER WAY AROUND FIND ANOTHER ATTACK DOG FOR ALL I CARE
AND YOU BETTER NOT HAVE HURT HIM
IT'S YOUR FAULT RODRIGUEZ AND NO ONE WILL BELIEVE YOU OVER ME I'LL SEE YOU IN DETENTION

WHERE AM...?
OH, SH--- OWOWOWOWOWOW!!
GOOD TO SEE YOU'RE AWAKE.
GREAT, NOW I GOTTA...
REST. YOU CAUGHT THE FLU AND THE FEVER KNOCKED YOU OUT.

REST? I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR... I GOTTA...
YOUR TEACHERS HAVE BEEN INFORMED.
YOU'VE BEEN EXEMPTED FROM YOUR FINALS.
I... WHAT? BUT...THEY ALL SAY YOU...
LET ME GUESS.
"IF YOU MISS FINALS WEEK, YOU BETTER BE DEAD"?
YEAH...
I WISH THE TEACHERS WOULD QUIT TELLING THEIR STUDENTS THAT.
IT ALWAYS SCARES THE WRONG KIDS.
HUH?


DOES THIS EXPLAIN THE HEADACHE AND SORENESS IN MY SHOULDERS?
IT COULD, BUT I BETTER CHECK THAT ANYWAY
MANUEL BROUGHT YOU IN
HE SAID HIS COACH CONFRONTED HIM ABOUT SOMETHING AND SLAMMED HIM AGAINST THE WALL, CATCHING YOU WITH HIM.
A WEEK AGO, I WOULDN'T BELIEVE HIM. NOW, I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED
HE DID SEEM EXTRA CONCERNED ABOUT YOU.
I'LL CALL YOUR ROOMMATE WITH THIS FEVER, YOU ARE NOT TO COME BACK THE NEXT 2 DAYS
ISN'T IT A SHORT WEEK THIS WEEK?
HOW ABOUT THAT? ENJOY YOUR SUMMER
SOME START TO SUMMER THIS IS

YOU CROSSED COACH STEVENS, DIDN'T YOU?
I JUST QUIT I WAS GARBAGE ANYWAY
YOU KNOW HE'S NEXT IN LINE FOR THE VARSITY COACH AFTER COACH RUTLEDGE RETIRES, RIGHT?
WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH ME?
YOU DON'T GET IT DO YOU? I MAY BE HIS PROTEGE.
HIS OFFERING TO VARSITY TO PROVE HOW GOOD HE IS YOU ARE A TOOL.
HIS TOOL. TO GUARANTEE HIS ADVANCEMENT
YOU DON'T QUIT ON HIM AND EXPECT TO

YOU ALREADY KNOW FEW PEOPLE HOLD WEIGHT OVER COACH STEVENS
YEAH I NOTICED WHEN MY HISTORY TEACHER REFUSED TO OVERTURN HIS DETENTION
YOU KNOW IT MEANS YOU HAVE NO HOPE THEY'LL EVEN REFUSE TO TELL COACH RUTLEDGE
YOU DESERVED IT ANYWAY I HOPE COACH STEVENS RUNS YOU TO DEATH
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
IT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR HELPING THE REJECT THIS MORNING YOU SHOULD HAVE JUST LEFT HIM ALONE LIKE THE REST OF US

RODRIGUEZ IS LATE. HE BETTER NOT HAVE DITCHED OR I'LL REALLY TEAR INTO HIM.
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT RODRIGUEZ?
I GAVE HIM DETENTION FOR SKIPPING CLASS. CAN'T I DISCIPLINE MY OWN PLAYER?
HE'S NO LONGER YOUR PLAYER
THE YEAR HASN'T ENDED YET, HE STILL IS
I STILL FIND IT ODD THAT YOU GIVE HIM DETENTION SHORTLY AFTER OUR DISCUSSION ABOUT HIM
WHAT ARE YOU IMPLYING?
OH, I'VE HEARD SOME RUMORS ABOUT YOU HARASSING HIM WHILE HE WAS HELPING A CLASSMATE TO THE NURSE
NAME NAMES OR IT'S JUST HEARSAY AT BEST
AND RISK THEM TO YOU? NO

COACH STEVENS?
ABOUT TIME RODRIGUEZ OUT TO THE PRACTICE FIELD
HOLD ON MANUEL. GO SIT SOMEWHERE I'LL CALL YOU IN
YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO
I HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO OVERRIDE YOUR DECISIONS
I GET IT ONCE I RETIRE, YOU'RE PRACTICALLY A SHOE-IN TO REPLACE ME BUT IT'S STILL NOT A GUARANTEE
WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH
EVERYTHING, APPARENTLY
YOU'VE GOTTEN AWAY WITH A LOT INTIMIDATING STUDENTS AND TEACHERS GETTING YOUR WAY
MISUSING PLAYERS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE YOUR STANDING I'M PUTTING MY FOOT DOWN HERE
UNDER WHAT AUTHORITY OLD MAN?
MINE

YOU'RE THROUGH.
I WOULD THINK TWICE ABOUT THAT.
IF I GO DOWN, I'M NOT GOING DOWN ALONE.
WHAT ARE STEVENS?
AT LEAST 20 COUNTS OF ASSAULT AND BATTERY SINCE HE STARTED PLAYING FAR BEYOND WHAT THE GAME CALLS FOR
DOES THIS PIECE OF TRASH EVEN KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE HE CRIPPLED?
ALL OF THEM FAR MORE VALUABLE THAN HE WILL EVER HOPE TO BE
UNDER YOUR
I NEVER TOLD YOU TO CRIPPLE THEM. EVEN IF I DID, THAT STILL WON'T HOLD UP IN COURT

THAT IS AN IDLE THREAT AND YOU KNOW IT
WHO KNOWS? ATHLETES HAVE FACED CHARGES FOR IN-GAME CRIMES BEFORE
THOSE ARE RARE
AND RODRIGUEZ IS NOT A NORMAL CASE
I WONDER IF HE EVEN KNOWS THE NAMES OF THOSE HE'S CRIPPLED
THEIR NAMES?
OF COURSE, YOU WOULDN'T. WHY WOULD YOU CARE? THEY WERE JUST TARGET PRACTICE FOR YOU
YOU KNOW WHAT? GO SIT OUT THERE. YOU CAN READ THIS FOR YOUR DETENTION
WHAT'S THIS?
SCOUTING REPORTS. ON EVERY POTENTIAL CAREER YOU ENDED.

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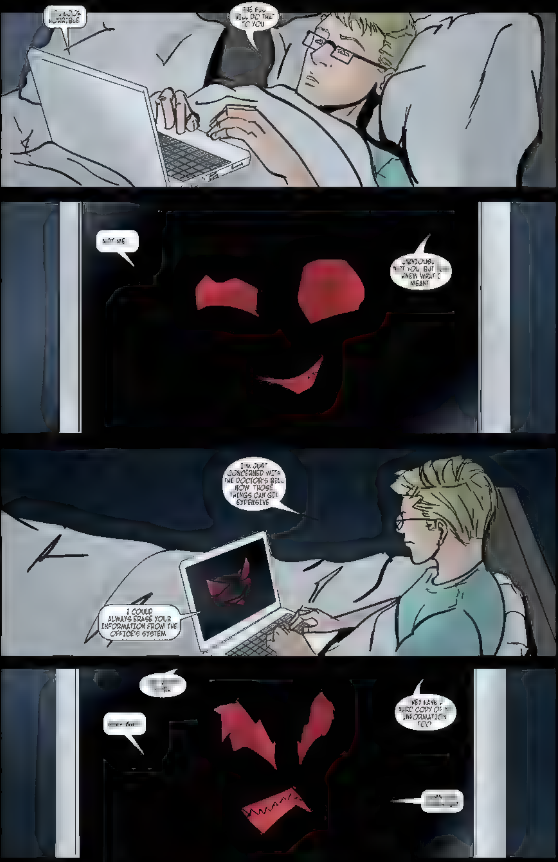
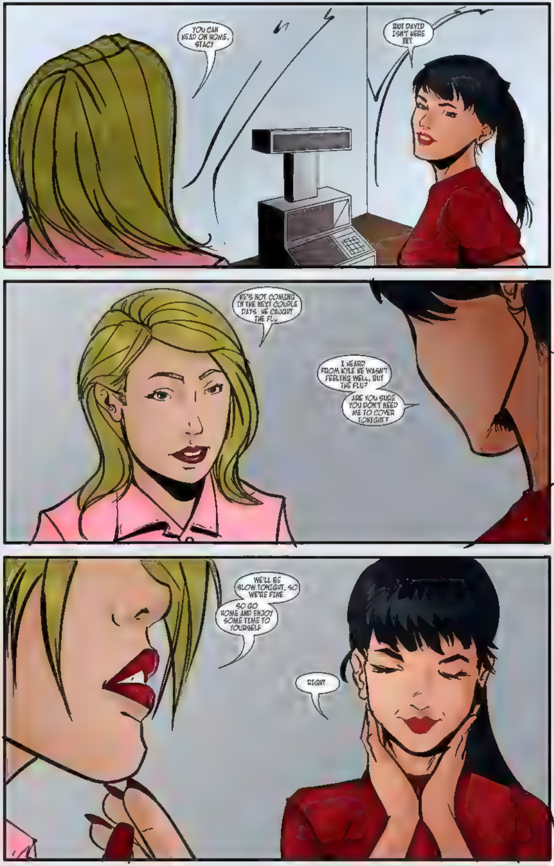
RODRIGUEZ COME IN HERE
YES, SIR
HAVE A SEAT
OKAY
MANUEL, I HAVE TO APOLOGIZE
FOR WHAT? HIM? HE'S JUST
A JERK. I KNOW
I CAN SEE WHY YOU QUIT, BUT I STILL WANT TO MAKE YOU AN OFFER TO JOIN VARSITY
YOU REALLY DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT. I KNOW I'M A GARBAGE PLAYER
NO, YOU'RE NOT
HUH?

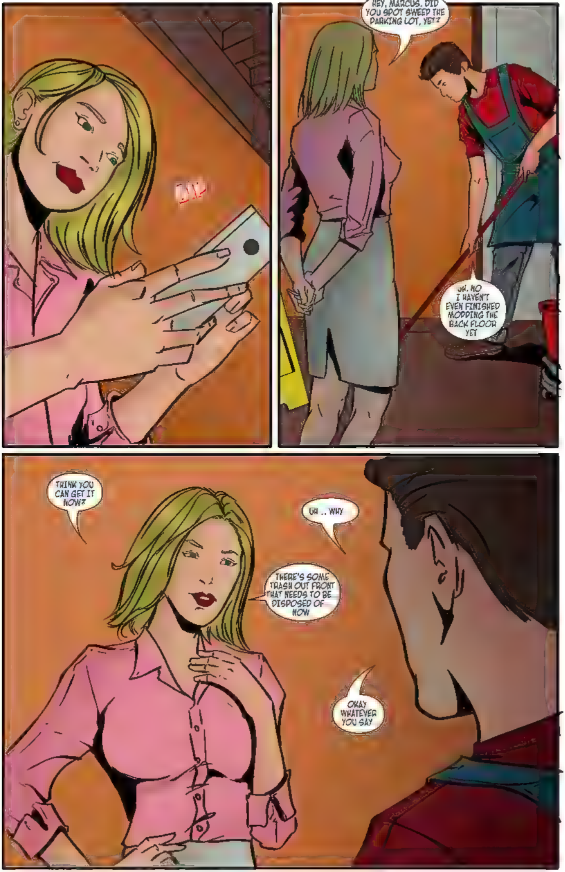
STEVENS HAS BEEN MISUSING AND ABUSING YOU, MANUEL
I'VE WANTED YOU ON VARSITY FOR A WHILE, BUT YOU HAD TO WORK YOUR WAY UP LIKE EVERYONE ELSE
YOU MAKE FOR A PROMISING LINEMAN.
POSSIBLY EVEN A LINEBACKER, BUT STEVENS DEEMED YOU AN ENFORCER AND USED YOU AS SUCH
BUT WHY?
STEVENS ISN'T BLIND HE SAW THE SAME THING I DID HE
HIMSELF
YOU'LL STILL BE A RESERVE LINEMAN, BUT YOU'LL BE IN BETTER POSITION TO LEARN PROPERLY SO HOW ABOUT IT?

I CAN GIVE YOU SOME TIME, BUT DON'T FORGET THERE'S CAMPS OVER THE SUMMER, SO YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH.
I'LL HAVE TO THINK ABOUT IT
I KNOW. JUST I'VE SPENT THE LAST COUPLE YEARS THINKING
THEN THIS?
I UNDERSTAND
YOU CAN RETURN THAT B THE WAY
ACTUALLY, CAN I TAKE IT HOME TO READ? IT'S... PART OF MY DECISION
THOSE INJURIES AREN'T YOUR FAULT, MANUEL
JUST BECAUSE COACH STEVENS WANTED THEM DOESN'T EXCUSE ME FROM THEM


I'M JUST CONCERNED WITH THE DOCTOR'S BILL NOW. THOSE THINGS CAN GET EXPENSIVE
I COULD ALWAYS ERASE YOUR INFORMATION FROM THE OFFICE'S SYSTEM


YOU CAN HEAD ON HOME, STACY
BUT DAVID ISN'T HERE
HE'S NOT COMING IN THE NEXT COUPLE DAYS HE CAUGHT THE FLU
I HEARD FROM KYLE HE WASN'T FEELING WELL, BUT THE FLU?
ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T NEED ME TO COVER TONIGHT?
WE'LL BE SLOW TONIGHT, SO WE'RE FINE
SO GO HOME AND ENJOY SOME TIME TO YOURSELF
RIGHT

THIS IS REALLY A BAD TIME TO BE SICK, DAVID I REALLY NEED TO TALK TO YOU
SO, THIS IS WHERE YOU'VE BEEN WORKING? NO WONDER WHY YOUR FOLKS ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOU
I TOLD YOU TO STOP BOTHERING ME
NOT UNTIL YOU HEAR ME OUT
WHAT? YOU HADN'T LEARNED FROM LAST NIGHT?
LAST NIGHT? WHEN THAT BRAT INTERRUPTED US?
HE'LL BE LUCKY NOT TO LAND IN PRISON FOR THAT
SEND

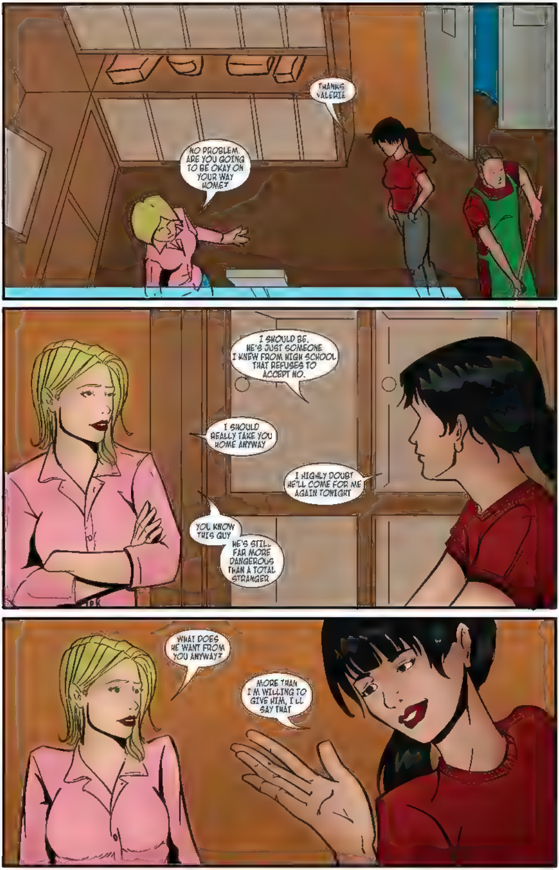

HEY, MARCUS. DID YOU SPOT SWEEP THE PARKING LOT, YET?
UH, NO I HAVEN'T EVEN FINISHED MOPPING THE BACK FLOOR YET
THINK YOU CAN GET IT NOW?
UH .. WHY
THERE'S SOME TRASH OUT FRONT THAT NEEDS TO BE DISPOSED OF NOW
OKAY WHATEVER YOU SAY

I TOLD YOU BEFORE. THERE IS NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT
BULL SHIT THERE ISN'T IT'S OUR PARENTS THAT ARE TRYING
SIR I'M GONNA HAVE TO ASK YOU TO LEAVE
WHAT IS THIS? STAY OUT OF THIS TRASH BOY. THIS DOESN'T INVOLVE YOU.
SIR, YOU SERIOUSLY DON'T WANT TO DO THIS HERE.
OUR BOSS USUALLY DECIDES TO HAVE HER OWN FUN WITH PEOPLE LIKE YOU BEFORE SHE CALLS THE COPS, SO I SERIOUSLY SUGGEST YOU LEAVE
WHAT ARE YOU...?
WAIT, THIS IS THAT DINER? THE ONE THAT'S SUPPOSEDLY...
HIGHLY SECURED YES YES IT IS

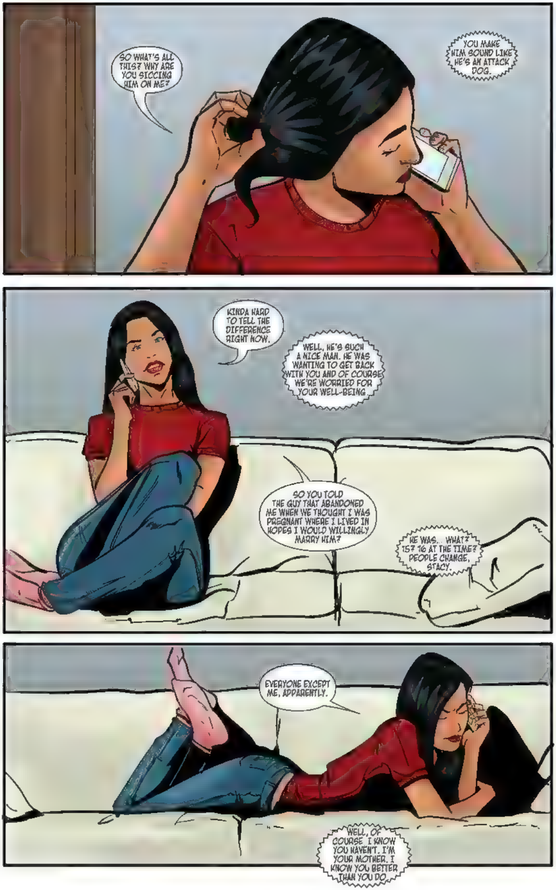
FINE COME ON, STACY
OW!
WHAT THE HELL?
I'M GIVING YOU A CHANCE TO LEAVE PEACEFULLY
DON'T CAUSE MORE TROUBLE AND MAKE ME BREAK YOUR GOOD ARM

WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM?
FROM MY UNDERSTANDING, SHE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE YOU, LET ALONE LET YOU TOUCH HER
THIS IS BETWEEN HER, HER FAMILY, AND ME!
I DON'T CARE YOU'RE STILL HARASSING HER.
SO IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GET POLICE INVOLVED, OR WORSE, I WOULD LEAVE IF I WERE YOU
WHAT IS WITH EVERYONE GETTING IN MY WAY?
DID VALERIE SEND YOU OUT?
YEAH, BUT WHEN SHE SAID THERE WAS TRASH TODISPOSE OF THAT WASN'T WHAT I HAD IN MIND

DO YOU NEED A LIFT HOME?
I'M FINE. HE JUST DOESN'T LIKE TAKING NO FOR AN ANSWER
IF MY PARENTS ARE INVOLVED LIKE HE SAYS THEY ARE THIS IS GETTING DISTURBING
WHY WOULD THEY SEND THAT SCUMBAG?
IT'S A LONG STORY AND THERE'S REALLY ONLY ONE PERSON I FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT IT WITH
IF YOU SAY SO I GOTTA GET BACK TO WORK, BUT YOU MAY WANT TO LET VALERIE KNOW YOU'RE OKAY PREFERABLY IN PERSON
YEAH, WHO KNOWS WHAT HIGH TECH ARMY SHE HAS READY TO HUNT ME DOWN


THANKS VALERIE
NO PROBLEM. ARE YOU GOING TO BE OKAY ON YOUR WAY HOME?
I SHOULD BE. HE'S JUST SOMEONE I KNEW FROM HIGH SCHOOL THAT REFUSES TO ACCEPT NO.
I SHOULD REALLY TAKE YOU HOME ANYWAY
I HIGHLY DOUBT HE'LL COME FOR ME AGAIN TONIGHT
YOU KNOW THIS GUY
HE'S STILL FAR MORE DANGEROUS THAN A TOTAL STRANGER
WHAT DOES HE WANT FROM YOU ANYWAY?
MORE THAN I'M WILLING TO GIVE HIM, I'LL SAY THAT

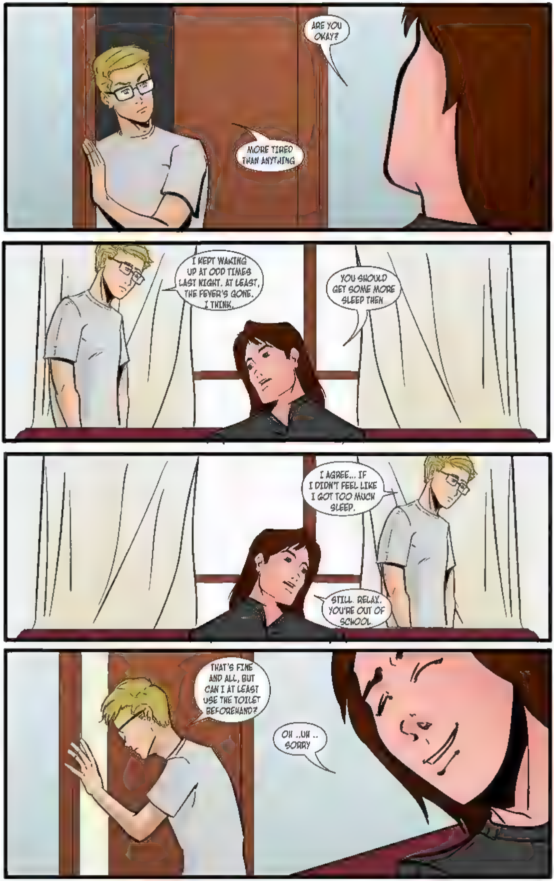
NOW WHAT?
YOU HAVE VIOLENT FRIENDS, I HEAR.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
THAT NICE YOUNG MAN. MAX? POOR MAN HAD HIS HAND BROKEN AND THREATENED BY YOUR SO-CALLED --
BECAUSE HE'S STALKING ME, MOM.
WELL, IF YOU WEREN'T SO STUBBORN AND LISTEN TO HIM.
WHAT REASON DO I HAVE TO LISTEN TO HIM?


SO WHAT'S ALL THIS? WHY ARE YOU SICCING HIM ON ME?
YOU MAKE HIM SOUND LIKE HE'S AN ATTACK DOG.
KINDA HARD TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE RIGHT NOW.
WELL, HE'S SUCH A NICE MAN. HE WAS WANTING TO GET BACK WITH YOU AND OF COURSE WE'RE WORRIED FOR YOUR WELL-BEING...
SO YOU TOLD THE GUY THAT ABANDONED ME WHEN WE THOUGHT I WAS PREGNANT WHERE I LIVED IN HOPES I WOULD WILLINGLY MARRY HIM?
HE WAS... WHAT? 15? 16 AT THE TIME? PEOPLE CHANGE, STACY.
EVERYONE EXCEPT ME, APPARENTLY.
WELL, OF COURSE I KNOW YOU HAVEN'T. I'M YOUR MOTHER. I KNOW YOU BETTER THAN YOU DO.

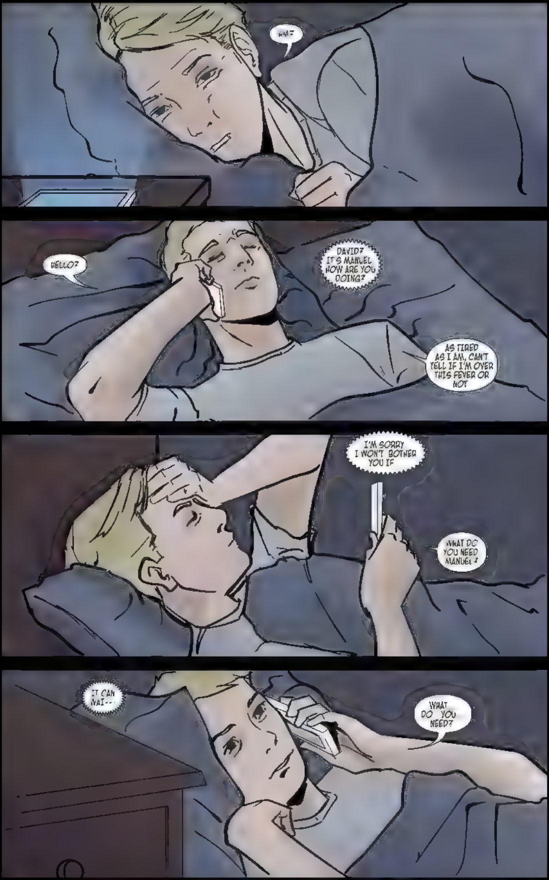
JUST LISTEN TO HIM, STACY.
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN.
WHY? HE HASN'T GIVEN ME ANY REASON TO.
YOU'RE HOPING I MARRY HIM. DON'T YOU?
IT'S THE LEAST YOU COULD DO, CONSIDERING YOU TWO ALREADY...
DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S WHY I DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH HIM?
YOU'RE ONLY ANGRY BECAUSE YOU KNOW I'M RIGHT
MOTHERS ALWAYS ARE

HI STACY
HI DAVID. I'M IN HERE!
HOW ARE YOU DOING?
I'M DOING GREAT. I'M .
FREEZE, SCUMBAG.
HUH?
DON'T QUESTION ME, YOU PIECE OF SHIT!

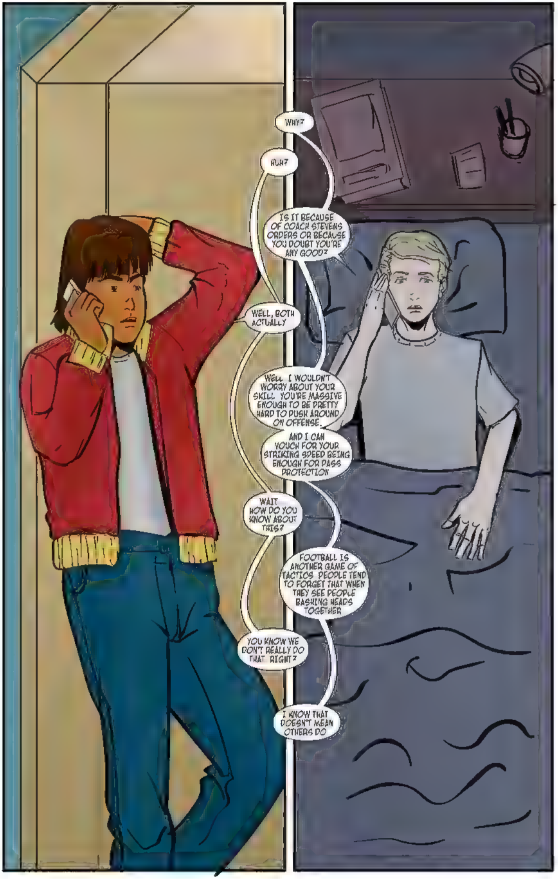
YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR RAPE, SO SHUT UP AND STOP RESISTING BEFORE I PUT A BULLET IN YOUR HEAD.
WHAT THE HELL?
WAIT, WHAT?
HE OBVIOUSLY RAPED YOU.
BUT HE DIDN'T
MA'AM. NO WOMAN WOULD WILLINGLY HAVE SEX WITH THIS LOWLIFE
BETTER YET, KEEP RESISTING IT'LL HELP ME SAVE EVERYONE'S TIME AND MONEY
I SWEAR MY MIND IS MESSED UP.


ARE YOU OKAY?
MORE TIRED THAN ANYTHING
I KEPT WAKING UP AT ODD TIMES LAST NIGHT. AT LEAST, THE FEVER'S GONE. I THINK.
YOU SHOULD GET SOME MORE SLEEP THEN
I AGREE... IF I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE I GOT TOO MUCH SLEEP.
STILL. RELAX. YOU'RE OUT OF SCHOOL.
THAT'S FINE AND ALL, BUT CAN I AT LEAST USE THE TOILET BEFOREHAND?
OH ..UH .. SORRY

HELLO?
HI, ERICA. IT'S KYLE. CAN I ASK YOU A FAVOR?
YOU MAY BE A FRIEND, BUT YOU WILL STILL OWE ME FOR IT.
THAT'S FINE, BUT IT'S LESS FOR ME THAN IT IS FOR DAVID. HE'S AT HOME WITH THE FLU
OH...
HE'S FINE ON HIS OWN, BUT I JUST NEED YOU TO CHECK ON HIM WHEN YOU CAN
SURE, NO PROBLEM


HELLO?
DAVID? IT'S MANUEL HOW ARE YOU DOING?
AS TIRED AS I AM, CAN'T TELL IF I'M OVER THIS FEVER OR NOT
I'M SORRY I WON'T BOTHER YOU IF
WHAT DO YOU NEED MANUEL?
IT CAN WAI--
WHAT DO YOU NEED?

WE'LL, YOU KNOW HOW I TOLD YOU ABOUT HOW I WAS A THIRD STRING JV SCRUB?
YES, WHAT ABOUT IT?
COACH RUTLEDGE TALKED TO ME AND SAID HE HAD WANTED ME SINCE I WAS A FRESHMAN
REALLY? THEN WHAT WAS ALL THIS ENFORCER STUFF.
COACH STEVENS WAS BEING AN ASSHOLE AND USING ME TO SECURE WINS BY IN INJURING OPPOSING PLAYERS
I WAS JUST HIS TOOL
THAT SUCKS SO WHY DID COACH RUTLEDGE TELL YOU THIS?
HE'S OFFERING ME A SPOT ON VARSITY
WELL, THAT'S GOOD
BUT I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD TAKE IT.

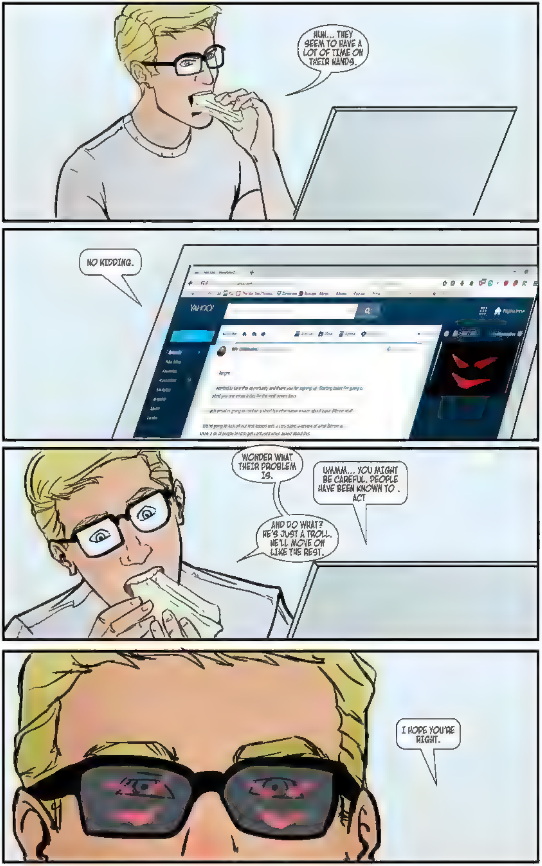

WHY?
HUH?
IS IT BECAUSE OF COACH STEVENS ORDERS OR BECAUSE YOU DOUBT YOU'RE ANY GOOD?
WELL, BOTH ACTUALLY
WELL I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT YOUR SKILL YOU'RE MASSIVE ENOUGH TO BE PRETTY HARD TO PUSH AROUND ON OFFENSE.
AND I CAN VOUCH FOR YOUR STRIKING SPEED BEING ENOUGH FOR PASS PROTECTION
WAIT HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS?
FOOTBALL IS ANOTHER GAME OF TACTICS PEOPLE TEND TO FORGET THAT WHEN THEY SEE PEOPLE BASHING HEADS TOGETHER
YOU KNOW WE DON'T REALLY DO THAT RIGHT?
I KNOW THAT DOESN'T MEAN OTHERS DO

AND WHAT ABOUT
WHAT ABOUT IT?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I CAN'T IGNORE IT
NO, BUT WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?
THIS IS THE TIME TO BE SELFISH AND DO WHAT YOU WANT
FRANKLY YOU DON'T OWE ANYONE NOT STEVENS NOT EVEN RUTLEDGE LET ALONE ANYONE ELSE
BUT RUTLEDGE IS THE ONE MAKING THE OFFER.
FRANKLY, HE'S COMPLICIT IN ALLOWING COACH STEVENS TO DO WHAT HE DID.
SO DON'T DECIDE ON THE BASIS THAT YOU OWE ANYONE ANYTHING. MAKE THE DECISION YOU WANT FORGET EVERYONE ELSE.

RIIIING
I GOTTA GET GOING, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING I SHOULD TELL YOU
WHAT NOW?
I SAW A GUY HARASSING STACY SUNDAY EVENING
WHAT?
YEAH. THE GUY ACTED LIKE HE KNEW HER, TOO
I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF HE HAD BEEN STALKING HER
I'M SORRY IF IT WAS A BAD TIME TO TELL YOU, BUT I FIGURED YOU'D NEEDED TO KNOW. I GOTTA GO
SEE YOU LATER

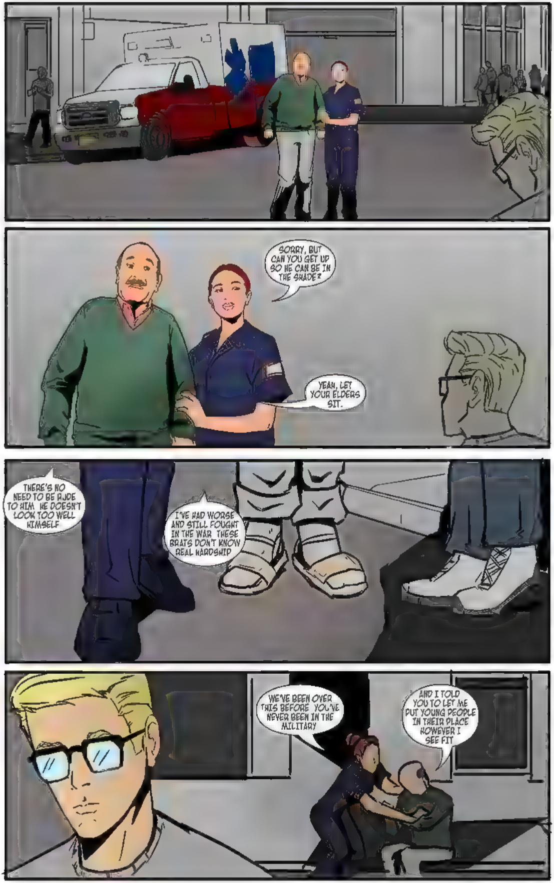
I SHOULD CALL STACY, BUT I CAN'T EVEN THINK STRAIGHT RIGHT NOW.
SERIOUSLY CAN'T SLEEP NOW, BUT

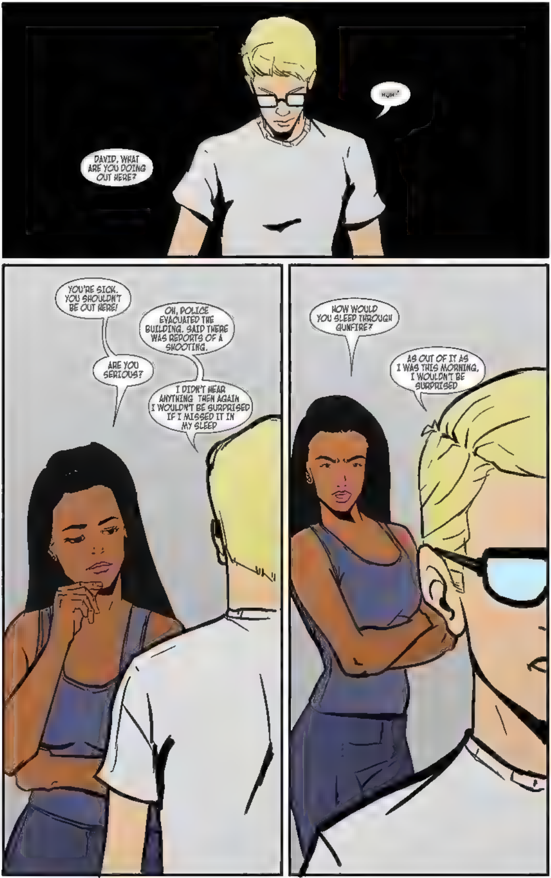
HUH? WHY IS MY PHONE . ?
OH, RIGHT! I WAS CHECKING ON STACY!
GAH HER SHIFT ALREADY STARTED!
WELL, NOW THAT I'M AWAKE, I GUESS I CAN GET SOMETHING TO EAT


HUH... THEY SEEM TO HAVE A LOT OF TIME ON THEIR HANDS.
NO KIDDING.
WONDER WHAT THEIR PROBLEM IS.
UMMM... YOU MIGHT BE CAREFUL. PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO ACT
AND DO WHAT? HE'S JUST A TROLL. HE'LL MOVE ON LIKE THE REST.
I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT.

WHAT'S THAT ALL ABOUT?
POLICE! LET US IN!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, KID?
SHOULDN'T YOU BE AT SCHOOL?
THIS IS MY HOME. WHAT ELSE?
THEY LITERALLY TOLD ME NOT TO AFTER CATCHING THE FLU.
RIGHT. WHERE'S YOUR PARENTS?
THEY DON'T LIVE HERE, OR IN TOWN AT ALL FOR THAT MATTER.
MY ROOMMATE IS AT WORK.

CLEAR!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
WE RECEIVED A CALL REPORTING GUNFIRE SOMEWHERE IN THIS APARTMENT
WELL, I HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING.
EVEN THEN WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO ASK YOU TO EVACUATE UNTIL WE FINISHED SWEEPING THE COMPLEX.
THAT'S A VERY BAD IDEA CONSIDERING...
IF YOU NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION THERE'S AN AMBULANCE OUTSIDE.
WHATEVER YOU SAY

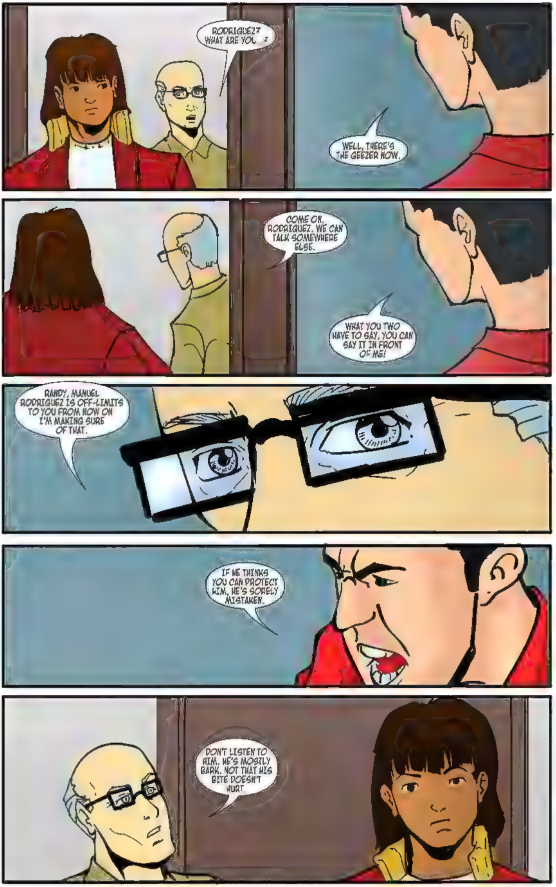

SORRY, BUT CAN YOU GET UP SO HE CAN BE IN THE SHADE?
YEAH, LET YOUR ELDERS SIT.
THERE'S NO NEED TO BE RUDE TO HIM HE DOESN'T LOOK TOO WELL HIMSELF
I'VE HAD WORSE AND STILL FOUGHT IN THE WAR THESE BRATS DON'T KNOW REAL HARDSHIP
WE'VE BEEN OVER THIS BEFORE YOU'VE NEVER BEEN IN THE MILITARY
AND I TOLD YOU TO LET ME PUT YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR PLACE HOWEVER I SEE FIT

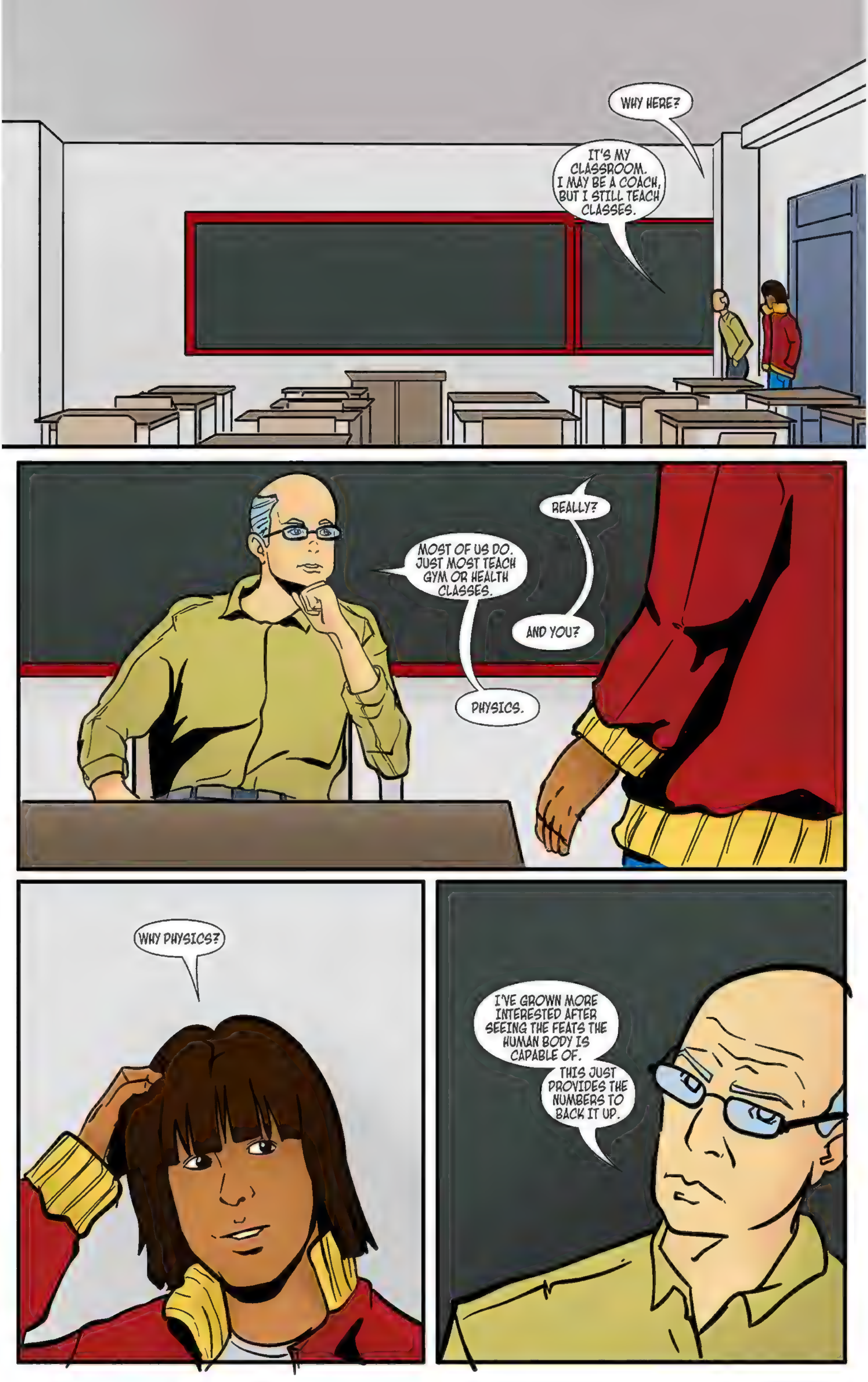

DAVID, WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE?
HUH?
YOU'RE SICK. YOU SHOULDN'T BE OUT HERE!
OH, POLICE EVACUATED THE BUILDING. SAID THERE WAS REPORTS OF A SHOOTING.
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING THEN AGAIN I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF I MISSED IT IN MY SLEEP
HOW WOULD YOU SLEEP THROUGH GUNFIRE?
AS OUT OF IT AS I WAS THIS MORNING, I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED

WE SHOULD AT LEAST GET YOU WHERE THERE IS AC
I'M SORRY, BUT HE CAN'T LEAVE RIGHT NOW
HUH?
COME ON! HE'S OUT HERE WITH THE FLU! WHY ARE YOU ?
MA'AM HE HAS TO REMAIN HERE. WE HAVE AMBULANCES HERE FOR THAT REASON.
IF HE NEEDS IT, WHICH HE SEEMS FINE RIGHT NOW, HE CAN SEEK HELP THERE
DON'T YOU THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER TO MAKE IT SO HE WON'T NEED IT?
MAYBE, BUT IT'S BETTER HE ENDS UP HOSPITALIZED THAN TO LET A POTENTIAL SUSPECT OR WITNESS GO

THIS SUCKS.
WHY WEREN'T YOU SITTING IN THE SHADE IF YOU COULDN'T LEAVE?
ANY SPACE WITH SHADE IS TAKEN BY PEOPLE THAT NEED IT MORE EVEN IF THEY ARE ASSHOLES
OH
WAS THERE REALLY A SHOOTING?
SOMEONE REPORTED IT.
I KNOW WHAT GUNSHOTS SOUND LIKE AND I HADN'T HEARD ANYTHING, SO IT'S PROBABLY A...
I'M AN IDIOT
WHAT?
I RECEIVED A TROLL E-MAIL EARLIER HE PROBABLY PLACED THE FAKE PHONE CALL.

COACH RUT... OH.
WHAT DO YOU WANT, RODRIGUEZ?
I CAME TO SEE COACH RUTLEDGE I'LL COME BACK LATER
QUITTERS HAVE NO BUSINESS WITH HIM, SO WHAT DO YOU
THAT'S BETWEEN HIM AND ME
WELL, NOW, IT'S BETWEEN YOU AND ME NOW. TELL ME BEFORE I MAKE YOU RUN LAPS UNTIL YOU DROP DEAD
AREN'T YOU ON YOUR WAY OUT AFTER YESTERDAY ?
YOU DON'T DO WHAT I DO WITHOUT HAVING A FEW GUARANTEES INCLUDING ENOUGH TO LOCK PEOPLE AWAY


RODRIGUEZ? WHAT ARE YOU...?
WELL, THERE'S THE GEEZER NOW.
COME ON, RODRIGUEZ. WE CAN TALK SOMEWHERE ELSE.
WHAT YOU TWO HAVE TO SAY, YOU CAN SAY IT IN FRONT OF ME!
RANDY, MANUEL RODRIGUEZ IS OFF-LIMITS TO YOU FROM NOW ON. I'M MAKING SURE OF THAT.
IF HE THINKS YOU CAN PROTECT HIM, HE'S SORELY MISTAKEN.
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM. HE'S MOSTLY BARK. NOT THAT HIS BITE DOESN'T HURT.


WHY HERE?
IT'S MY CLASSROOM. I MAY BE A COACH, BUT I STILL TEACH CLASSES.
REALLY?
MOST OF US DO. JUST MOST TEACH GYM OR HEALTH CLASSES.
AND YOU?
PHYSICS.
WHY PHYSICS?
I'VE GROWN MORE INTERESTED AFTER SEEING THE FEATS THE HUMAN BODY IS CAPABLE OF.
THIS JUST PROVIDES THE NUMBERS TO BACK IT UP.

SO DID YOU COME TO A DECISION?
MORE OR LESS. I JUST HAVE A QUESTION OR TWO.
JUST... HOW MUCH DID YOU ALREADY KNOW ABOUT COACH STEVENS AND HIS... BEHAVIOR?
THAT'S A FAIR QUESTION TO ASK.
I SUSPECTED IT FOR SOME TIME, BUT UNTIL RECENTLY, HAD NO CONCRETE PROOF.
YOU WERE THE FIRST TO PROVIDE ANY.
FOR THAT, I OWE YOU AND MANY OTHER PEOPLE AN APOLOGY. I FAILED YOU AND EVERYONE ELSE INVOLVED.

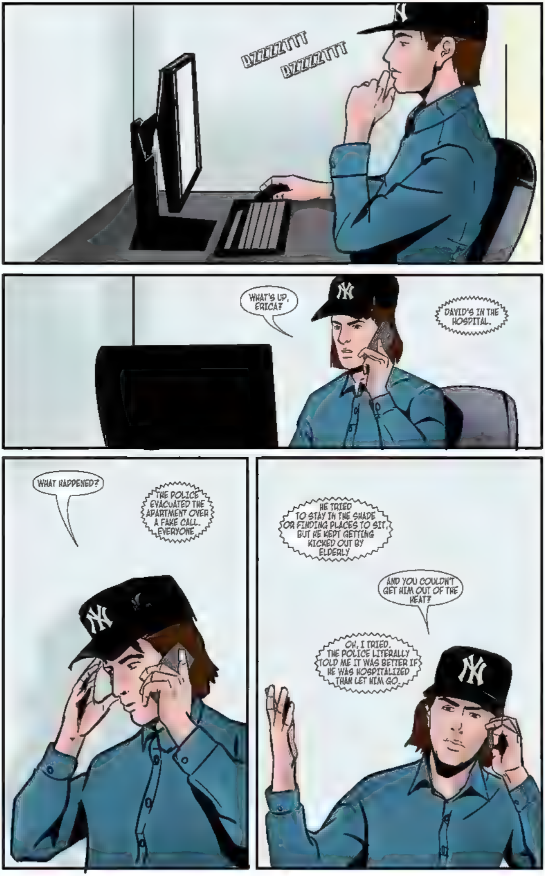
LISTEN, MY DECISION HERE IS NOT BECAUSE I FEEL I OWE YOU ANYTHING.
NOR DO I THINK YOU OWE [redacted].
I'D LIKE TO THINK I'M BEYOND COACH STEVENS' PETTINESS.
EVEN KNOWING WHAT I WENT THROUGH WAS JUST HIS DOING, I STILL DON'T DELUDE MYSELF INTO THINKING I'M GOING ANYWHERE WITH FOOTBALL AFTER HIGH SCHOOL.
AND I NEED TO THINK ABOUT MY FUTURE.
I STILL DON'T [redacted] TO DO WITH IT.
BUT NEED TO DO SOMETHING UNTIL THEN.
MAYBE I CAN [redacted] PLAYING THAN NOT.
FOR NOW, I ACCEPT YOUR OFFER TO JOIN VARSITY.

I'M IMPRESSED, RODRIGUEZ.
HUH?
YOU THOUGHT THIS THROUGH IN WAYS I DIDN'T CONSIDER.
WELL, YEAH I KINDA HAD SOME HELP FROM A FRIEND IN MY CONSIDERATION.
HE DIDN'T PRESSURE YOU INTO IT, DID HE?
NOT AT ALL. THOUGH I WAS SURPRISED HOW MUCH HE KNEW ABOUT FOOTBALL, THOUGH HE'S NO ATHLETE HIMSELF BY ANY STRETCH.
MAYBE YOU SHOULD INTRODUCE ME TO THIS YOUNG MAN

I GOT WORK TO DO YOU MAY WANT TO HEAD HOME YOURSELF.
ALL RIGHT.

OH, I SHOULD LET YOU KNOW I SIGNED UP FOR PHYSICS NEXT YEAR.
HOPEFULLY, YOU END UP BEING MY TEACHER.
MAYBE YOU CAN SHOW ME WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED.

GAH!
ARE YOU OKAY?
I'LL BE FINE WHENEVER THEY'RE...
...DONE.
...SON OF A BITCH!


BZZZZTTT
BZZZZTTT
WHAT'S UP, ERICA?
DAVID'S IN THE HOSPITAL.
WHAT HAPPENED?
THE POLICE EVACUATED THE APARTMENT OVER A FAKE CALL. EVERYONE.
HE TRIED TO STAY IN THE SHADE OR FINDING PLACES TO SIT, BUT HE KEPT GETTING KICKED OUT BY ELDERLY
AND YOU COULDN'T GET HIM OUT OF THE HEAT?
OH, I TRIED. THE POLICE LITERALLY TOLD ME IT WAS BETTER IF HE WAS HOSPITALIZED THAN LET HIM GO.

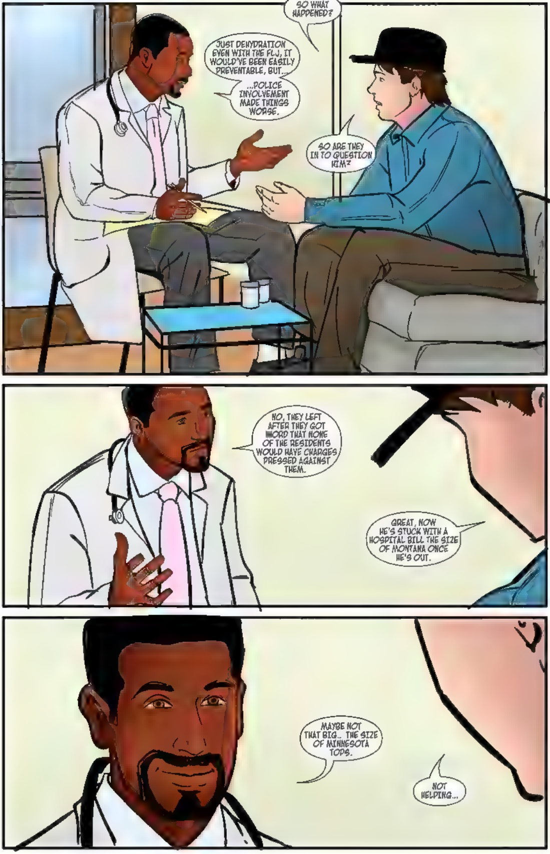
WHAT NOW?
BZZZZTTT
BZZZZTTT
HEL---
WHERE IS DAVID? HE'S NOT PICKING UP HIS PHONE.
DON'T YOU.. OH, OF COURSE YOU WOULDN'T KNOW.
HE'S PROBABLY ASLEEP OR SOMETHING
WHY WOULD HE...?
DAVID'S BEEN SICK WITH THE FLU THIS WEEK. HE'S PROBABLY NOT EVEN CONSCIOUS RIGHT NOW.
OH SORRY

SORRY, ERICA. GOTTA CHECK THIS CALL REAL QUICK.
JUST COME BY THE HOSPITAL AS SOON AS YOU CAN
HELLO
WHEN WERE YOU GONNA TELL ME DAVID HAD THE FLU?
WHEN YOU TELL ME HOW YOU GOT MY PHONE NUMBER!
NEVER MIND THAT. IS HE OKAY?
I JUST FOUND OUT HE WAS IN THE HOSPITAL. I'M HEADING THERE SOON
HE HAD TO BE HOSPITALIZED?
ONLY BECAUSE SOME ASSHOLE DECIDED TO PRANK CALL THE POLICE ON THE APARTMENT COMPLEX.

LISTEN, I GOTTA TELL MY BOSS I'M LEAVING, SO...
I'M ON MY WAY.
I'M NOT SURE THAT'S A GOOD IDEA, CONSIDERING LAST TIME
I'M NOT COMING TO SEE HIM. I KNOW THAT'LL MAKE HIM WORSE.
WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING THEN?
TO HELP HIM HOW I CAN. THEN, I'M HEADING BACK HOME.
I KNOW YOU DON'T TRUST ME.
KYLE, DAVID TRUSTS YOU. AND THAT'S A LOT

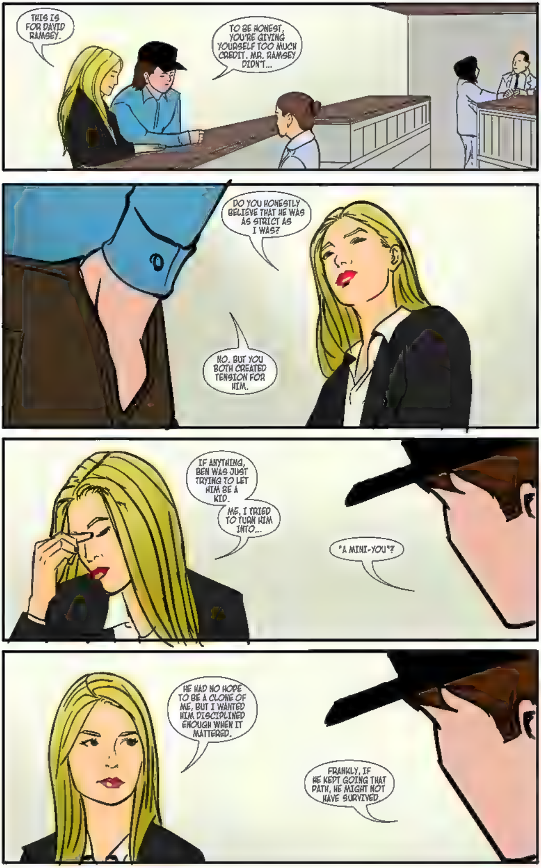
GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE AWAKE.
WHAT HAPPENED?
YOU DEHYDRATED YOURSELF.
HOW? I WASN'T OUTSIDE THAT LONG, WAS I?
IT WAS ALMOST 100 DEGREES OUT AND YOU HAD THE FLU.
YOU NEEDED TO STAY HYDRATED MORE THAN MOST OF THE PEOPLE THERE.
EVEN IF I DID, IT WASN'T LIKE THEY WOULD ALLOW ME ACCESS
YOU HEARD THEM YOURSELF.
WHICH IS WHY I DON'T KNOW WHO TO BE FRUSTRATED WITH MORE
YOU FOR YOUR STUBBORNNESS OR THE COPS THAT FORCED THIS SITUATION.

KYLE'S ON THE WAY. I'LL WAIT OUT IN THE WAITING ROOM UNTIL HE SHOWS UP
OKAY.
JUST REST
NEVER MIND THE DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT HOW CAN I AFFORD THIS?
BREAKING NEWS
SHOOTING SUSPECT CHARGED
ATTEMPTED MURDER
MORE ON THE SHOOTING THAT HAPPENED AT A LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL...
HUH?!
I KNEW THE MEDIA RESPONSE WOULD BE BAD, BUT AFTER ONE OR TWO WEEKS?


SO WHAT HAPPENED?
JUST DEHYDRATION EVEN WITH THE FLU, IT WOULD'VE BEEN EASILY PREVENTABLE, BUT...
...POLICE INVOLVEMENT MADE THINGS WORSE.
SO ARE THEY IN TO QUESTION HIM?
NO, THEY LEFT AFTER THEY GOT WORD THAT NONE OF THE RESIDENTS WOULD HAVE CHARGES PRESSED AGAINST THEM.
GREAT, NOW HE'S STUCK WITH A HOSPITAL BILL THE SIZE OF MONTANA ONCE HE'S OUT.
MAYBE NOT THAT BIG.. THE SIZE OF MINNESOTA TOPS.
NOT HELPING...

IS HE CURRENTLY ON ANY PRESCRIPTIONS?
YEAH.
WELL, HE'S AWAKE NOW. HE'S GOOD TO RETURN HOME SINCE THE POLICE SHOULD BE OUT OF THE APARTMENT NOW.
IT TOOK THEM LONG ENOUGH.
YOU ENJOY YOUR DAY.
I'LL TRY AFTER ALL THIS.
YOU GOT HERE QUICK.
HOW DID YOU?
YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON THAT MAKES MY HAIR STAND UP
AND CONSIDERING I SLEPT WITH VALERIE, THAT'S SAYING A LOT.

HOW IS HE?
HE'S FINE, NOW. THE POLICE JUST COMPLICATED THINGS.
I'M ABOUT TO HAVE HIM CHECKED OUT, NOW, SO WE CAN GO HOME.
BEFORE YOU DO, LET ME DO SOMETHING.
HUH? WHAT ARE YOU?
I NEVER HAD HIM TAKEN OFF MY HEALTH INSURANCE YET.
I DIDN'T BRING IT UP SINCE IT DIDN'T SEEM IMPORTANT.
AND WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS NOW?
WE BOTH KNOW IT'S MY FAULT HE'S AS STUBBORN AND HARD ON HIMSELF AS HE IS...


THIS IS FOR DAVID RAMSEY.
TO BE HONEST, YOU'RE GIVING YOURSELF TOO MUCH CREDIT. MR. RAMSEY DIDN'T...
DO YOU HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT HE WAS AS STRICT AS I WAS?
NO. BUT YOU BOTH CREATED TENSION FOR HIM.
IF ANYTHING, BEN WAS JUST TRYING TO LET HIM BE A KID.
ME, I TRIED TO TURN HIM INTO...
"A MINI-YOU"?
HE HAD NO HOPE TO BE A CLONE OF ME, BUT I WANTED HIM DISCIPLINED ENOUGH WHEN IT MATTERED.
FRANKLY, IF HE KEPT GOING THAT PATH, HE MIGHT NOT HAVE SURVIVED.

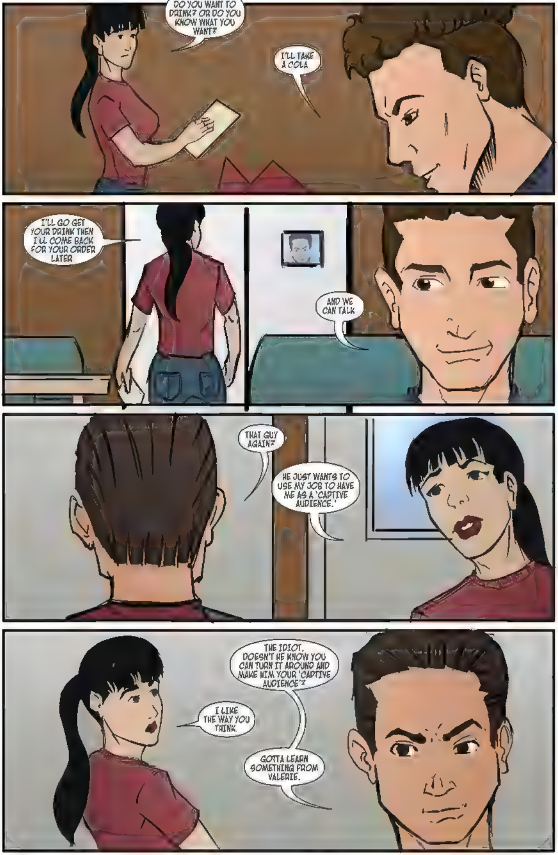
DON'T TELL DAVID I DID THIS FOR HIM.
HUH? WHY?
I ALREADY TOLD VALERIE TO TELL HIM SHE DID IT.
THAT DOESN'T REALLY ANSWER MY QUESTION.
THINK, IF HE KNEW I DID THIS, WHAT WOULD HE THINK?
PROBABLY THAT HE OWED YOU SOMETHING.
EXACTLY. AFTER ALL I PUT HIM THROUGH, HE REALLY DOESN'T OWE ME ANYTHING.

SIR? CAN I HELP YOU?
UH, YES. I'M HEAR TO SIGN DAVID RAMSEY OUT. I'M HIS ROOMMATE AND GUARDIAN.
THAT WOMAN JUST SIGNED HIM OUT. YOU CAN FIND HIM IN THIS ROOM.
THANKS.
DAVID, I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND HOW MANY PEOPLE YOU WORRIED.

ARE YOU READY?
PAST READY
I'M JUST NOT LOOKING FORWARD TO THE MESS TO PAY THIS.
YOUR MO... I MEAN YOUR BOSS TOOK CARE OF IT
I REALLY DON'T WANT TO KNOW, DO I?
MAYBE NOT...

THIS WILL BE A LONG WALK.
I ALREADY CALLED A CAB. I'M NOT RISKING YOUR HEALTH
AND ONCE WE FINISH EATING DINNER, YOU'RE GOING TO BED.
I REALLY SHOULD CALL STACY TOO.
I FORGOT TO MENTION SHE CALLED ON SUNDAY
YOU LEFT YOUR PHONE OUT WHEN SHE CALLED.
HUH?
SHE DIDN'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT FOR SOME REASON
MANUEL TOLD ME WHEN HE CALLED THIS MORNING
SHE'S GOT A STALKER
...OH

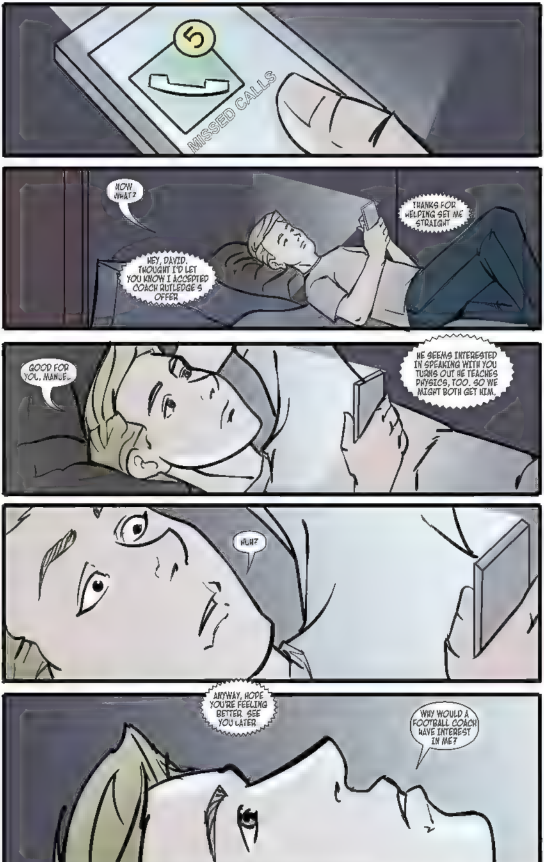
WELCOME TO OH, IT S YOU
HI STACY
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
CAN'T A GUY GET A BITE TO EAT SOMEWHERE?
YOU'VE BEEN STALKING ME ALL WEEK WHAT ARE YOU...?
FINE I FIGURED NOW THAT I'M A PAYING CUSTOMER AND NOT JUST A RANDOM CREEP, YOU'D HEAR ME OUT
YOU KNOW SOME OF OUR CUSTOMERS HAVE BEEN CREEPS WORTHY OF VALERIE'S SECURITY MEASURES RIGHT?
AT THIS POINT, I'LL TAKE THE RISK

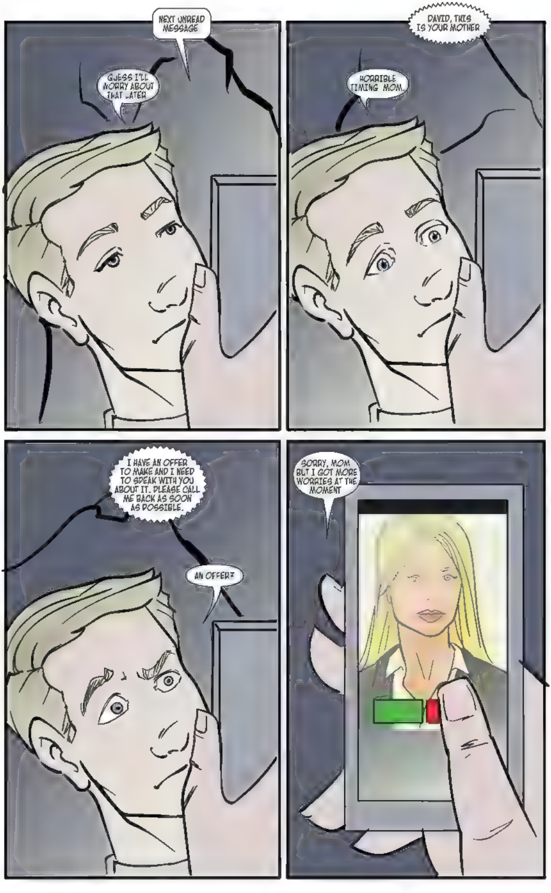


SO WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DRINK? OR DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WANT?
I'LL TAKE A COLA
I'LL GO GET YOUR DRINK THEN I'LL COME BACK FOR YOUR ORDER LATER
AND WE CAN TALK
THAT GUY AGAIN?
HE JUST WANTS TO USE MY JOB TO HAVE ME AS A 'CAPTIVE AUDIENCE.'
THE IDIOT. DOESN'T HE KNOW YOU CAN TURN IT AROUND AND MAKE HIM YOUR 'CAPTIVE AUDIENCE'?
I LIKE THE WAY YOU THINK.
GOTTA LEARN SOMETHING FROM VALERIE.

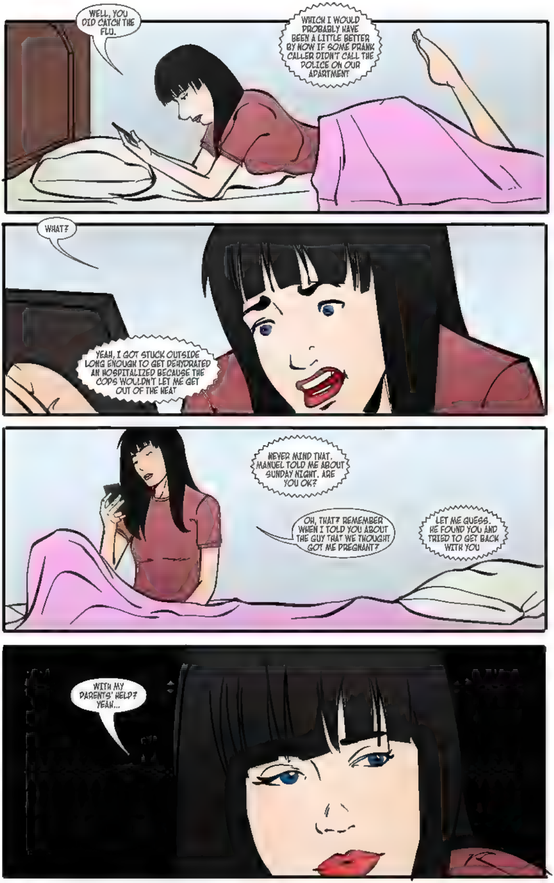
SO ARE YOU READY TO TALK?
ONLY IF YOU'RE READY TO LISTEN.
UH..
YOU REFUSE TO LISTEN OTHERWISE, SO YOU WILL NOW
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR PROBLEM IS, AND I FRANKLY DON'T CARE.
MY PARENTS POINTED YOU TO ME HOPING YOU'D WHISK ME OFF AND MARRY ME, BUT I DIDN'T FORGET WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN US BEFORE
WE WERE 15! YOU THINK WE COULDN'T HANDLE IT BETTER NOW?
LEAVING A POTENTIALLY PREGNANT GIRLFRIEND IS A LOW BAR TO CLEAR
AND NOT TO MENTION THE SEX WASN'T EVEN GOOD ENOUGH TO MAKE THE DEBACLE WORTHWHILE
OKAY A LOT BETTER

OKAY, YOU'VE GOT A MINUTE...
SAY YOUR PIECE, PLACE YOUR ORDER, OR I'LL GO GET YOUR CHECK NOW SO YOU CAN LEAVE.
HUH?
TO BE HONEST, I WAS HOPING TO GET YOU BACK.
AFTER FINDING OUT YOU WEREN'T DOING MUCH WITH YOUR LIFE FROM YOUR FOLKS, I FIGURED I MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE.
NOT WINNING ANY POINTS THERE.
I KNOW, SO I'LL TAKE THE CHICKEN FINGER BASKET.
HUH?
MY ORDER...
OH!
TO GO...
I'LL BRING YOU YOUR CHECK THEN.


5
MISSED CALLS
NOW WHAT?
THANKS FOR HELPING SET ME STRAIGHT
HEY, DAVID. THOUGHT I'D LET YOU KNOW I ACCEPTED COACH RUTLEDGE'S OFFER
GOOD FOR YOU, MANUEL.
HE SEEMS INTERESTED IN SPEAKING WITH YOU TURNS OUT HE TEACHES PHYSICS, TOO. SO WE MIGHT BOTH GET HIM.
HUH?
ANYWAY, HOPE YOU'RE FEELING BETTER. SEE YOU LATER
WHY WOULD A FOOTBALL COACH HAVE INTEREST IN ME?

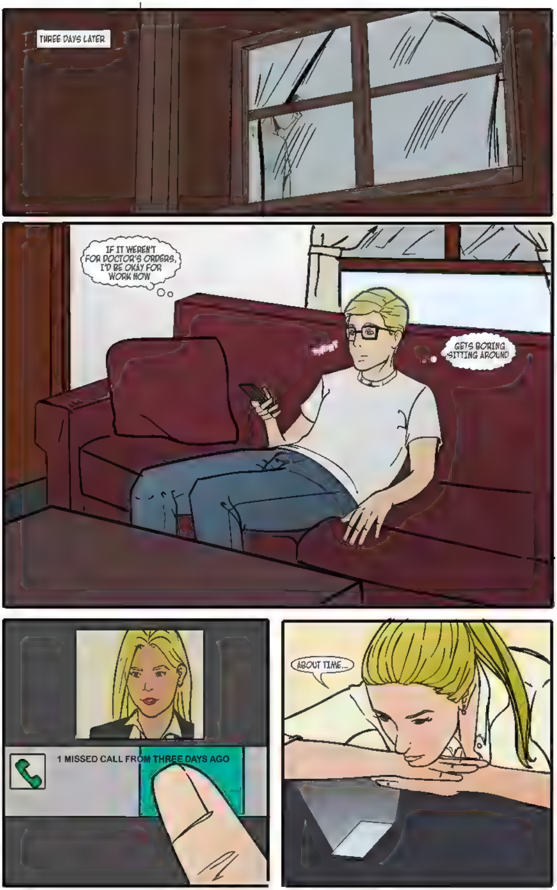

GUESS I'LL WORRY ABOUT THAT LATER
NEXT UNREAD MESSAGE
DAVID, THIS IS YOUR MOTHER
HORRIBLE TIMING MOM.
I HAVE AN OFFER TO MAKE AND I NEED TO SPEAK WITH YOU ABOUT IT. PLEASE CALL ME BACK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
AN OFFER?
SORRY, MOM BUT I GOT MORE WORRIES AT THE MOMENT

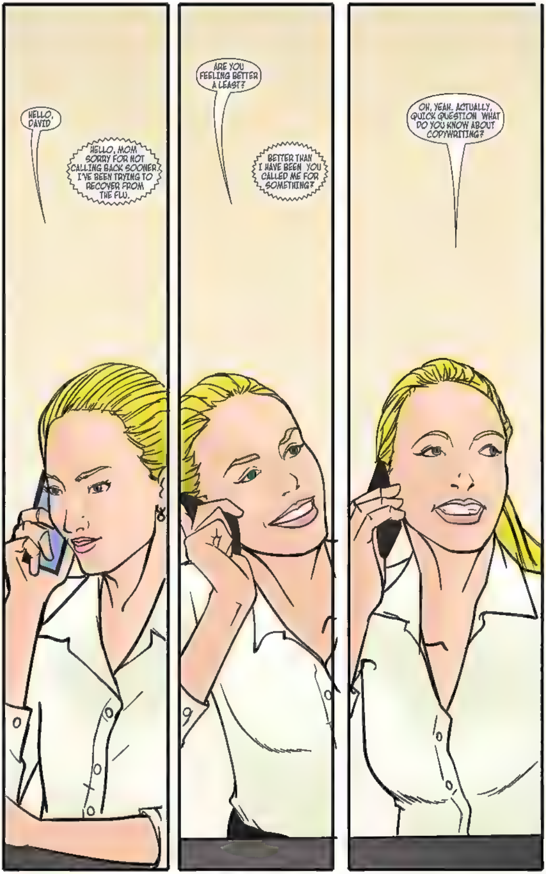
GOTTA CALL HER NOW
COME ON, I KNOW YOU'RE USUALLY OFF WORK NOW
HI, DAVID.
STACY! ARE YOU OKAY?
I SHOULD BE ASKING YOU THAT...
OH, YEAH, HOW COULD I FORGET I'VE BEEN SICK THE PAST WEEK?


WELL, YOU DID CATCH THE FLU.
WHICH I WOULD PROBABLY HAVE BEEN A LITTLE BETTER BY NOW IF SOME PRANK CALLER DIDN'T CALL THE POLICE ON OUR APARTMENT
WHAT?
YEAH, I GOT STUCK OUTSIDE LONG ENOUGH TO GET DEHYDRATED AN HOSPITALIZED BECAUSE THE COPS WOULDN'T LET ME GET OUT OF THE HEAT
NEVER MIND THAT. MANUEL TOLD ME ABOUT SUNDAY NIGHT. ARE YOU OK?
OH, THAT? REMEMBER WHEN I TOLD YOU ABOUT THE GUY THAT WE THOUGHT GOT ME PREGNANT?
LET ME GUESS. HE FOUND YOU AND TRIED TO GET BACK WITH YOU
WITH MY PARENTS' HELP? YEAH...

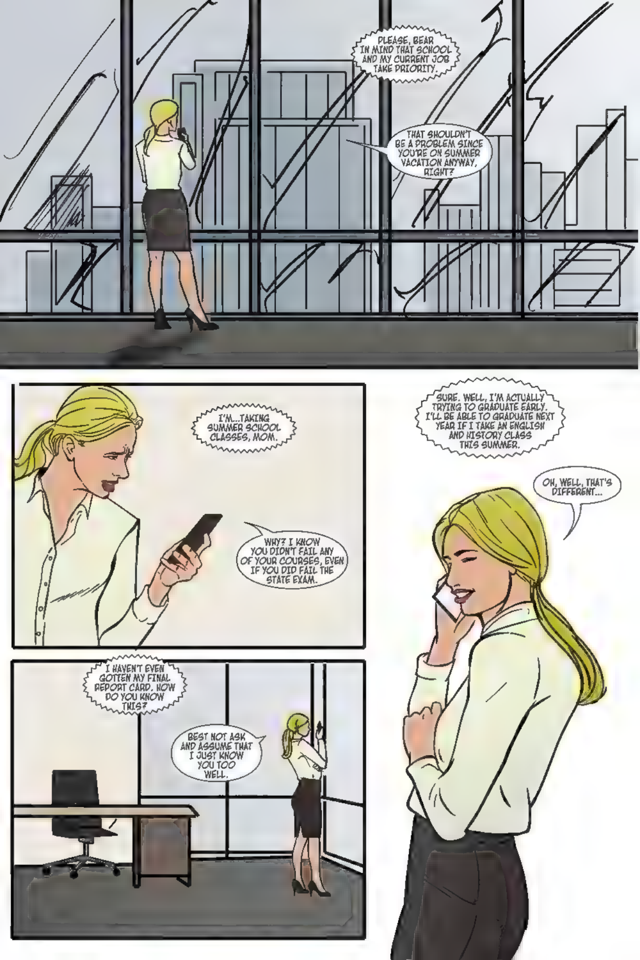
DID HE BUG YOU ANYMORE?
TWICE. BOTH TIMES HE WAS STUPID ENOUGH TO COME TO THE DINER.
I BET VALERIE HAD A FIELD DAY.
ACTUALLY, THE FIRST TIME, SHE SENT MARCUS TO HELP.
THE SECOND, HE WAS STUPID ENOUGH TO MAKE HIMSELF THE CAPTIVE AUDIENCE.
I DON'T SEE HIM COMING BACK. NOT AFTER BEING TOLD OFF.
I DON'T KNOW IF HE DIDN'T GET THE FIRST SET OF CLUES...
HE JUST REFUSED TO LISTEN TO THE FIRST CLUES. I MADE HIM LISTEN TO THE LAST.

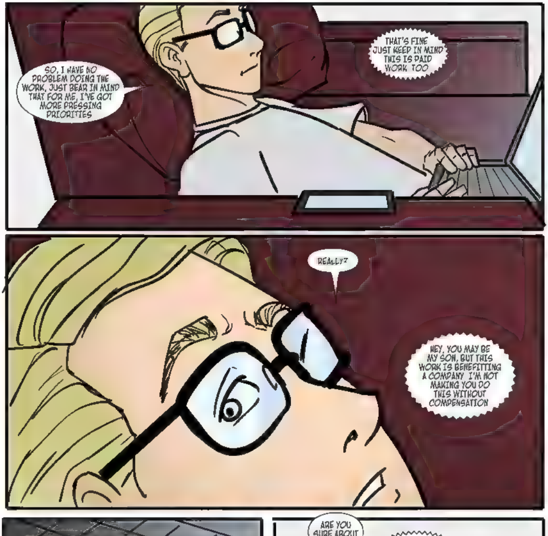
I'M JUST GLAD YOU'RE OKAY
SAME TO YOU. HOPEFULLY, WE'LL BE ABLE TO SPEND MORE TIME THIS SUMMER
BETWEEN WORK AND SUMMER SCHOOL, I MIGHT BE LUCKY
SUMMER SCHOOL?
YEAH, I JUST NEED A COUPLE OF CREDITS TO SKIP TO MY SENIOR YEAR AND GRADUATE NEXT YEAR.
OH, YEAH. I FORGOT. I COULDN'T IMAGINE YOU FAILING A CLASS.
CLASSES? NO STANDARDIZED TESTS? APPARENTLY...
UGH... I DON'T EVEN WANT TO THINK OF THOSE.

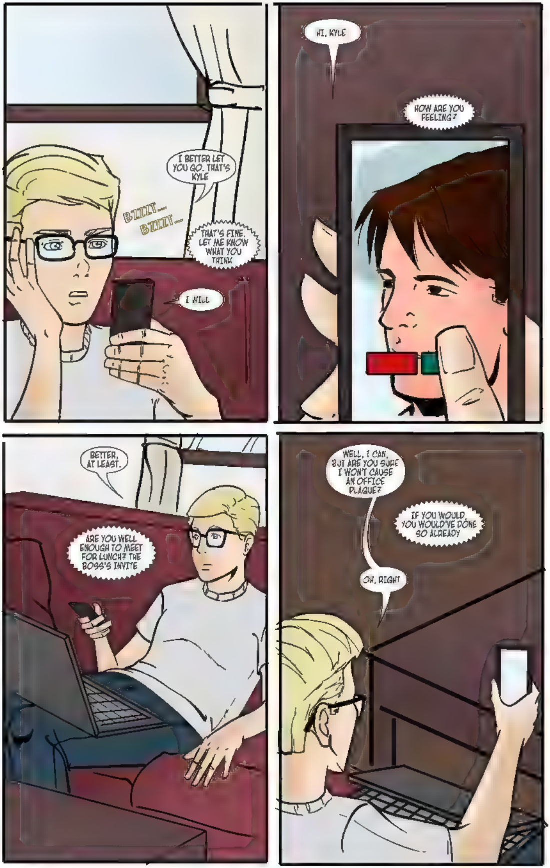

THREE DAYS LATER
IF IT WEREN'T FOR DOCTOR'S ORDERS, I'D BE OKAY FOR WORK NOW
GETS BORING SITTING AROUND
1 MISSED CALL FROM THREE DAYS AGO
ABOUT TIME...

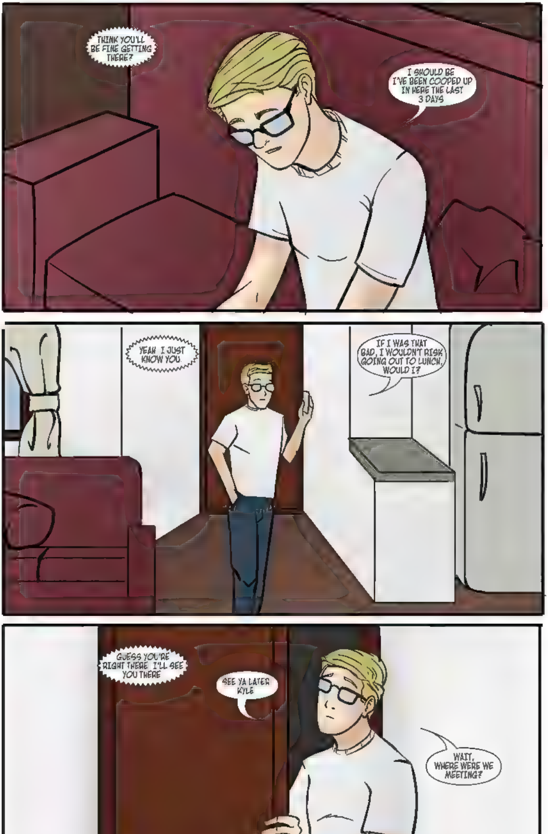

HELLO, DAVID
HELLO, MOM SORRY FOR NOT CALLING BACK SOONER I'VE BEEN TRYING TO RECOVER FROM THE FLU.
ARE YOU FEELING BETTER A LEAST?
BETTER THAN I HAVE BEEN YOU CALLED ME FOR SOMETHING?
OH, YEAH. ACTUALLY, QUICK QUESTION WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT COPYWRITING?

SHOULD I ASSUME YOU MEAN THE TYPE OF BUSINESS WRITING AND NOT 'LEGAL RIGHTS AND OWNERSHIP'?
SO YOU DO KNOW IT
I KNOW OF IT BUT I'VE NEVER HAD REASON TO DO IT MYSELF
YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO MANAGE THEN I'VE GOT A JOB OFFER FOR YOU
AN OFFER?
I'D LIKE YOU TO HELP WRITE DOCUMENTS FOR WORK VARIOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND THE LIKE FOR THE MOST PART
YOU KNOW THIS WILL MEAN I'LL HAVE TO LEARN WHAT YOU ACTUALLY DO FOR WORK.
THAT'S FINE I'M SURPRISED YOU HADN'T FIGURED IT OUT ALREADY

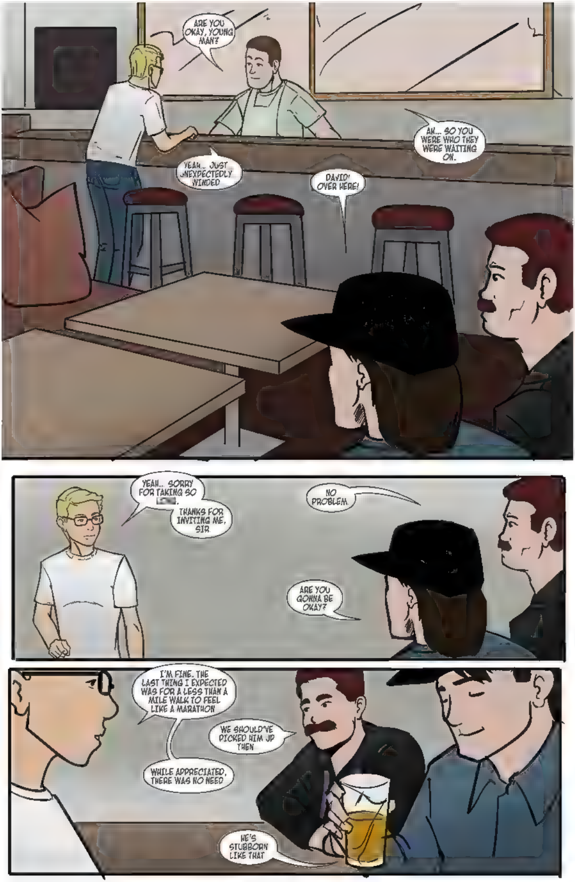

PLEASE, BEAR IN MIND THAT SCHOOL AND MY CURRENT JOB TAKE PRIORITY.
THAT SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM SINCE YOU'RE ON SUMMER VACATION ANYWAY, RIGHT?
I'M...TAKING SUMMER SCHOOL CLASSES, MOM.
WHY? I KNOW YOU DIDN'T FAIL ANY OF YOUR COURSES, EVEN IF YOU DID FAIL THE STATE EXAM.
I HAVEN'T EVEN GOTTEN MY FINAL REPORT CARD. HOW DO YOU KNOW THIS?
BEST NOT ASK AND ASSUME THAT I JUST KNOW YOU TOO WELL.
SURE. WELL, I'M ACTUALLY TRYING TO GRADUATE EARLY. I'LL BE ABLE TO GRADUATE NEXT YEAR IF I TAKE AN ENGLISH AND HISTORY CLASS THIS SUMMER.
OH, WELL, THAT'S DIFFERENT...


SO, I HAVE NO PROBLEM DOING THE WORK, JUST BEAR IN MIND THAT FOR ME, I'VE GOT MORE PRESSING PRIORITIES
THAT'S FINE JUST KEEP IN MIND THIS IS PAID WORK TOO
REALLY?
HEY, YOU MAY BE MY SON, BUT THIS WORK IS BENEFITTING A COMPANY I'M NOT MAKING YOU DO THIS WITHOUT COMPENSATION
YOU SHOULD BE GETTING THE EXPECTED PAY RATE IN YOUR E-MAIL NOW
LOOKS LIKE I JUST GOT IT OPENING IT NOW
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?
WHAT? IS IT NOT ENOUGH? I THOUGHT IT WAS NORMAL PAY.
FOR A VETERAN PRO, MAYBE.

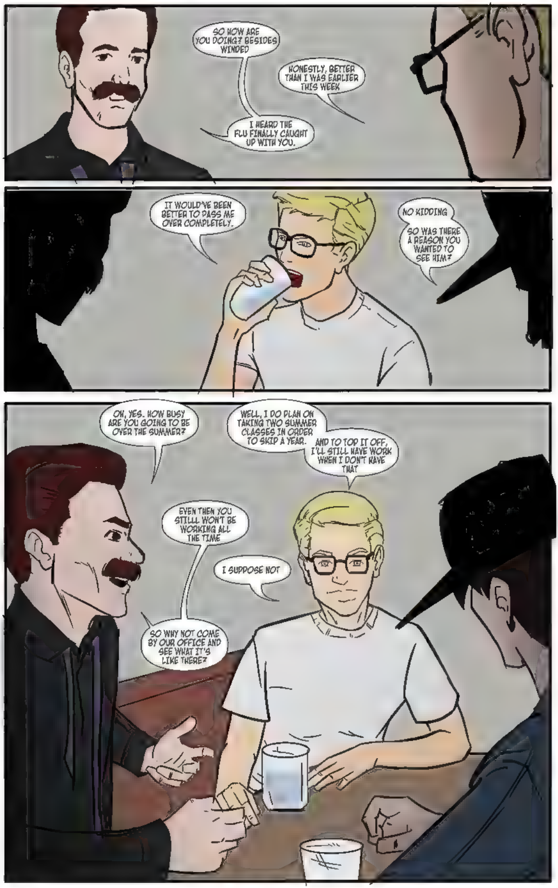

I BETTER LET YOU GO. THAT'S KYLE
BZZZT...
BZZZT...
THAT'S FINE. LET ME KNOW WHAT YOU THINK
I WILL
HI, KYLE
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
BETTER, AT LEAST.
ARE YOU WELL ENOUGH TO MEET FOR LUNCH? THE BOSS'S INVITE
WELL, I CAN, BUT ARE YOU SURE I WON'T CAUSE AN OFFICE PLAGUE?
IF YOU WOULD, YOU WOULD'VE DONE SO ALREADY
OH, RIGHT

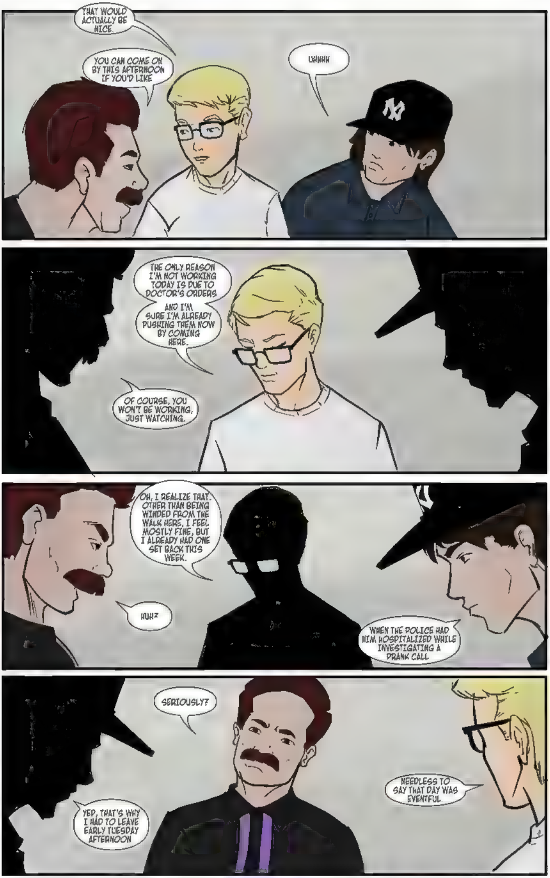

THINK YOU'LL BE FINE GETTING THERE?
I SHOULD BE I'VE BEEN COOPED UP IN HERE THE LAST 3 DAYS
YEAH. I JUST KNOW YOU.
IF I WAS THAT BAD, I WOULDN'T RISK GOING OUT TO LUNCH, WOULD I?
GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT THERE. I'LL SEE YOU THERE
SEE YA LATER KYLE
WAIT, WHERE WERE WE MEETING?

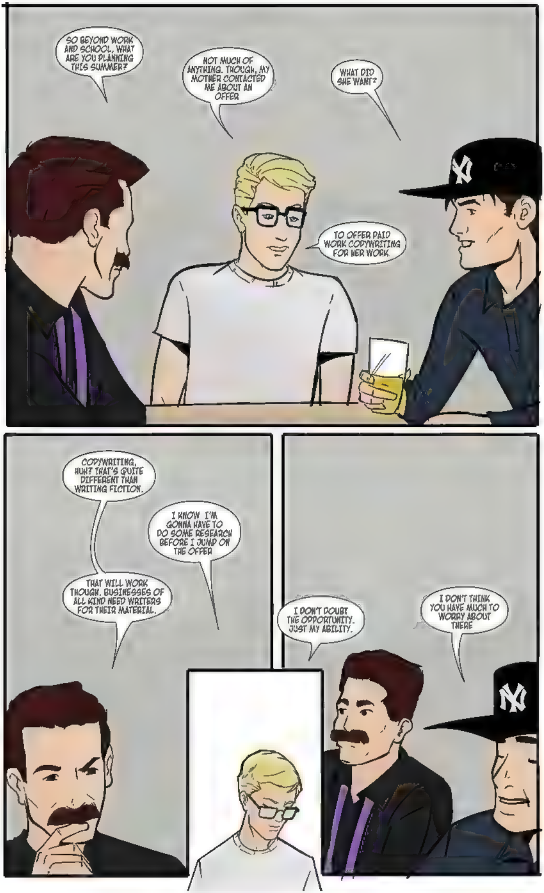
SO, IS HE COMING?
YEAH, HE'LL MEET US THERE
JUST DON'T MIND A FEW SNIFFLES. HE'S JUST GETTING OVER THE FLU
DOES HE KNOW HOW TO GET THERE?
HE SHOULD
HE OK
HE WILL NOW
YOU FORGOT TO TELL HIM WHERE, DIDN'T YOU?
MAYBE

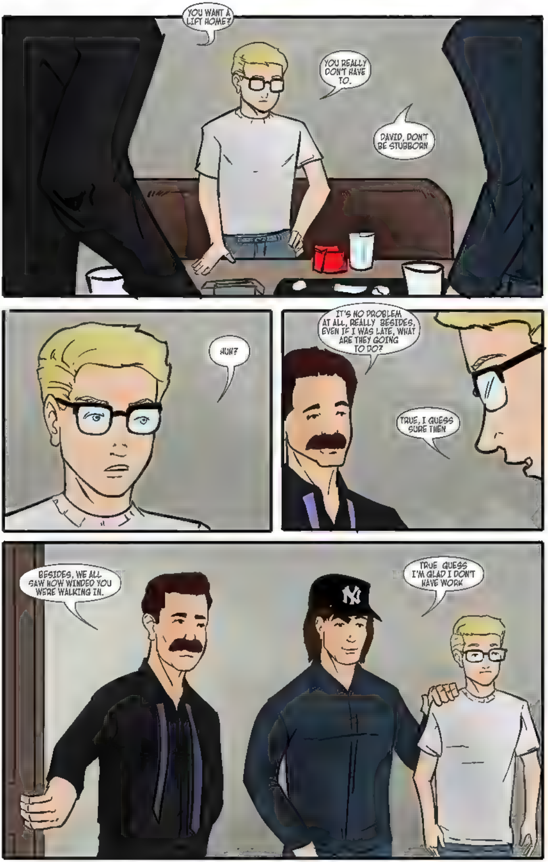


ARE YOU OKAY, YOUNG MAN?
YEAH... JUST UNEXPECTEDLY WINDED
AH... SO YOU WERE WHO THEY WERE WAITING ON.
DAVID! OVER HERE!
YEAH... SORRY FOR TAKING SO
THANKS FOR INVITING ME, SIR.
NO PROBLEM.
ARE YOU GONNA BE OKAY?
I'M FINE. THE LAST THING I EXPECTED WAS FOR A LESS THAN A MILE WALK TO FEEL LIKE A MARATHON
WE SHOULD'VE PICKED HIM UP THEN
WHILE APPRECIATED, THERE WAS NO NEED
HE'S STUBBORN LIKE THAT


SO HOW ARE YOU DOING? BESIDES WINDED
HONESTLY, BETTER THAN I WAS EARLIER THIS WEEK
I HEARD THE FLU FINALLY CAUGHT UP WITH YOU.
IT WOULD'VE BEEN BETTER TO PASS ME OVER COMPLETELY.
NO KIDDING
SO WAS THERE A REASON YOU WANTED TO SEE HIM?
OH, YES. HOW BUSY ARE YOU GOING TO BE OVER THE SUMMER?
WELL, I DO PLAN ON TAKING TWO SUMMER CLASSES IN ORDER TO SKIP A YEAR.
AND TO TOP IT OFF, I'LL STILL HAVE WORK WHEN I DON'T HAVE THAT
EVEN THEN YOU STILL WON'T BE WORKING ALL THE TIME
I SUPPOSE NOT
SO WHY NOT COME BY OUR OFFICE AND SEE WHAT IT'S LIKE THERE?


THAT WOULD ACTUALLY BE NICE.
YOU CAN COME ON BY THIS AFTERNOON IF YOU'D LIKE
UHHHH
THE ONLY REASON I'M NOT WORKING TODAY IS DUE TO DOCTOR'S ORDERS
AND I'M SURE I'M ALREADY PUSHING THEM NOW BY COMING HERE.
OF COURSE, YOU WON'T BE WORKING, JUST WATCHING.
OH, I REALIZE THAT. OTHER THAN BEING WINDED FROM THE WALK HERE, I FEEL MOSTLY FINE, BUT I ALREADY HAD ONE SET BACK THIS WEEK.
HUH?
WHEN THE POLICE HAD HIM HOSPITALIZED WHILE INVESTIGATING A PRANK CALL
SERIOUSLY?
YEP, THAT'S WHY I HAD TO LEAVE EARLY TUESDAY AFTERNOON
NEEDLESS TO SAY THAT DAY WAS EVENTFUL.

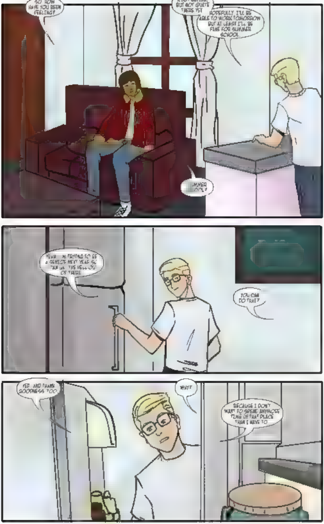

SO BEYOND WORK AND SCHOOL, WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING THIS SUMMER?
NOT MUCH OF ANYTHING. THOUGH, MY MOTHER CONTACTED ME ABOUT AN OFFER
WHAT DID SHE WANT?
TO OFFER PAID WORK COPYWRITING FOR HER WORK.
COPYWRITING, HUH? THAT'S QUITE DIFFERENT THAN WRITING FICTION.
I KNOW I'M GONNA HAVE TO DO SOME RESEARCH BEFORE I JUMP ON THE OFFER
THAT WILL WORK THOUGH. BUSINESSES OF ALL KIND NEED WRITERS FOR THEIR MATERIAL.
I DON'T DOUBT THE OPPORTUNITY. JUST MY ABILITY.
I DON'T THINK YOU HAVE MUCH TO WORRY ABOUT THERE



YOU WANT A LIFT HOME?
YOU REALLY DON'T HAVE TO.
DAVID, DON'T BE STUBBORN
HUH?
IT'S NO PROBLEM AT ALL, REALLY BESIDES, EVEN IF I WAS LATE, WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO DO?
TRUE, I GUESS SURE THEN
BESIDES, WE ALL SAW HOW WINDED YOU WERE WALKING IN.
TRUE GUESS I'M GLAD I DON'T HAVE WORK

THANK YOU, SIR.
NO PROBLEM.
SEE YOU AFTER WORK DAVID
SO WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT WITH HIM?
JUST TO SHOW HIM WHAT THINGS ARE LIKE THERE.
IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR HIM TO START THINKING ABOUT HIS FUTURE
HE'S BARELY GETTING HIS CURRENT SITUATION STRAIGHTENED OUT
THAT MAY BE TRUE, BUT HE SEEMS TO BE TAKING CHARGE OF IT
SO IF HE LIKES WHAT HE SEES, HE HAS AN OFFER WAITING

DAVID!
HUH?
DID YOU JUST GET OUT OF A CAR?
OH...YEAH, KYLE AND HIS BOSS INVITED ME TO LUNCH. I JUST GOT BACK.
COME ON IN.
UH...SURE. BUT WHY WOULD HIS BOSS WANT TO SPEAK WITH YOU?
JUST OFFERING A TOUR OF THE STUDIO THEY WORK AT.
REALLY? THAT SHOULD BE INTERESTING


SO HOW HAVE YOU BEEN FEELING?
A LOT BETTER, BUT NOT QUITE THERE YET
HOPEFULLY I'LL BE ABLE TO WORK TOMORROW BUT AT LEAST I'LL BE FINE FOR SUMMER SCHOOL.
YEAH... I'M TRYING TO BE A SENIOR NEXT YEAR SO I CAN GET THE HELL OUT OF THERE
YOU CAN DO THAT?
YEP. AND THANK GOODNESS TOO.
WHY?
BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO SPEND ANYMORE TIME IN THAT PLACE THAN I HAVE TO.

YOU KNOW THINGS WON'T BE AS BAD AS THEY HAVE BEEN, RIGHT?
TRUE. BUT WHAT OTHER PROBLEMS?
EVEN IF THAT WAS THE ONLY ISSUE, THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN GUARANTEE THAT ON YOUR OWN.
LET'S JUST SAY THE LESS I HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT, THE BETTER.
THINGS STILL AREN'T FULLY STABLE
WHAT ABOUT COLLEGE?
IF I GRADUATE EARLY I HAVE MORE TIME TO FOCUS ON WORK, SO I CAN MAKE MORE MONEY.
WHAT ABOUT IT?
I JUST... FIGURED YOU OF ALL PEOPLE WOULD BE.
I DON'T HAVE ANY SCHOLARSHIPS LINED UP, AND MY PARENTS MAKE TOO MUCH TO ALLOW FOR GRANTS
I'M NOT EXACTLY WILLING TO FALL INTO DEBT JUST FOR A PIECE OF PAPER THAT GUARANTEES NOTHING

I WISH I HAD THAT MUCH PLANNED
AND BEFORE I FIGURE THAT OUT NEED TO BE ABLE TO
YOU KNOW IF YOU WAIT FOR THAT, YOU WON'T GO ANYWHERE
IT BEATS RUSHING HEADLONG INTO SOMETHING

NOT A BAD SELECTION
I HAVEN'T HEARD OF THIS ONE
THAT'S ACTUALLY A 1-PLAYER GAME
REALLY? WHO PLAYS THOSE ANYMORE?
I DO THANK YOU VERY MUCH...

WOW, THIS IS HARDER THAN I THOUGHT EVEN FOR CO-OP MODE
I GOT YOUR BACK, JUST PLOW THROUGH
I FORGOT TO ASK. IF YOU WERE FEELING OKAY YOU HAVE TO COME BY MY HOUSE FOR DINNER
YOU SURE?
NOT REALLY, BUT MY PARENTS ARE CURIOUS ABOUT YOU.
WHAT HAVE YOU TOLD THEM ABOUT ME?
NOTHING THAT ISN'T TRUE.
MANUEL.
JUST THAT I'VE BEEN HANGING WITH YOU AND YOUR ROOMMATE

CENTER LANE

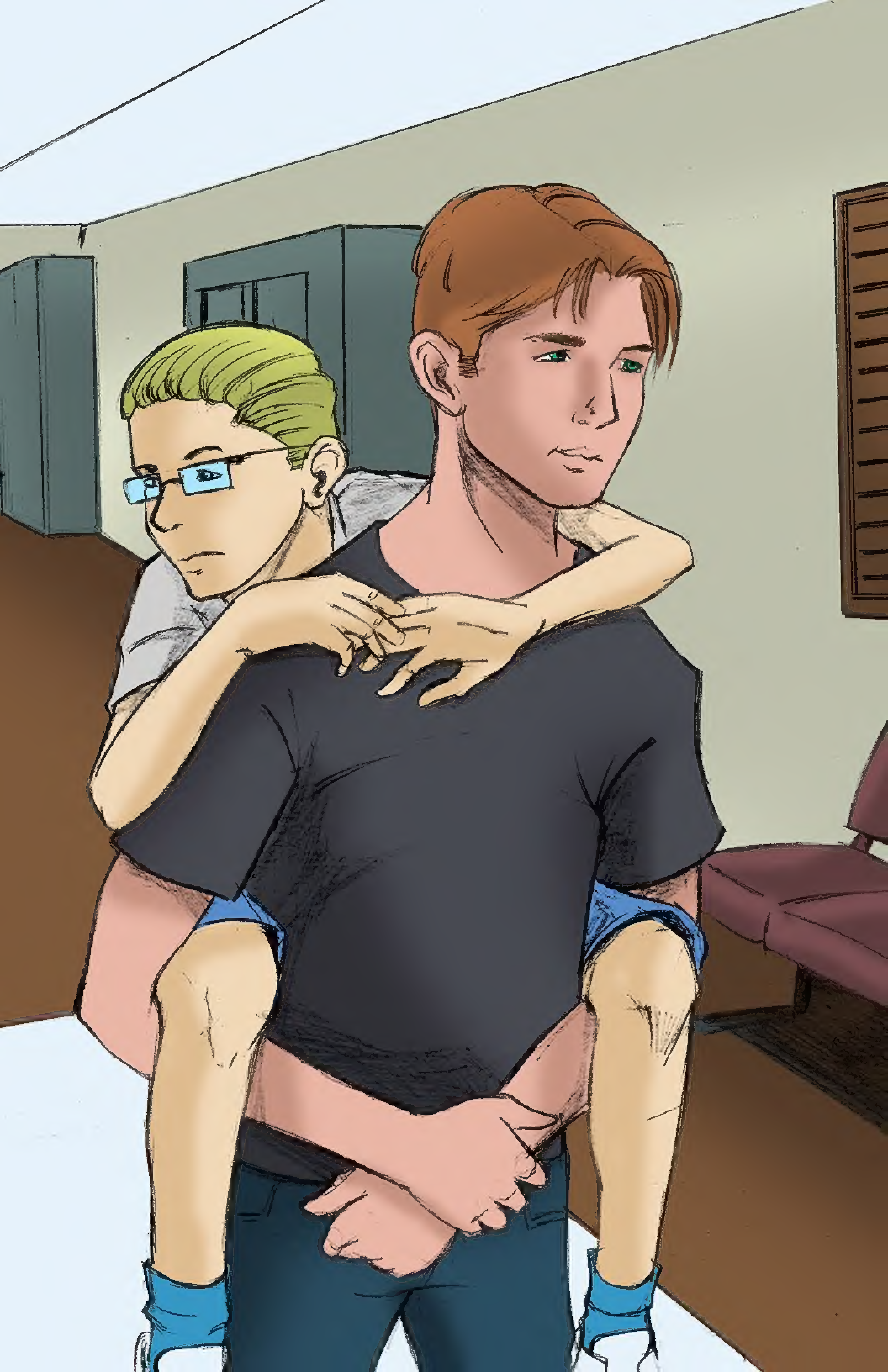
CENTER LANE

Become my patron on

patreon

CENTERLANE 300

GUEST COMIC FOR *CENTER LANE* BY MIKE PODGOR



Centerlane Family
Wishes you a
Happy New Year!!

SO, I THINK THE GROUP AT TABLE 3 MIGHT BE SPIES.
WHAT? ARE YOU SERIOUS?
WELL, WHEN I GOT THEM THEIR DRINKS, I HEARD THEM SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THEIR "CONTACT".
MAYBE ONE OF THEM LOST A CONTACT LENS.
NONE OF THEM IS LOOKING FOR ONE.
WHY WOULD SPIES HAVE A MEETING AT A DINER IN A NO-NAME MIDWESTERN TOWN?
THAT SEEMS ABOUT PERFECT FOR SPIES.
BESIDES, THAT ONE GIRL LOOKS LIKE SHE'S MY AGE.
NO, BUT I DOUBT ACTUAL SPY AGENCIES USE KIDS.
HAVEN'T YOU EVER SEEN SPY KIDS?
IT HAS TO BE A FULL MOON OR SOMETHING.
FIRST THAT THING WITH THE ROBOT A FEW DAYS AGO, AND NOW SPIES.
AND A DEMON IN MY COMPUTER...
WHAT WAS THAT?
HMM? OH, NOTHING.
WHATEVER. YOU'RE SO WEIRD SOMETIMES.
SORRY.
DON'T BE. IT'S CUTE.